

# TRAILING & CAMPING IN ALASKA



ADDISON M. POWELL



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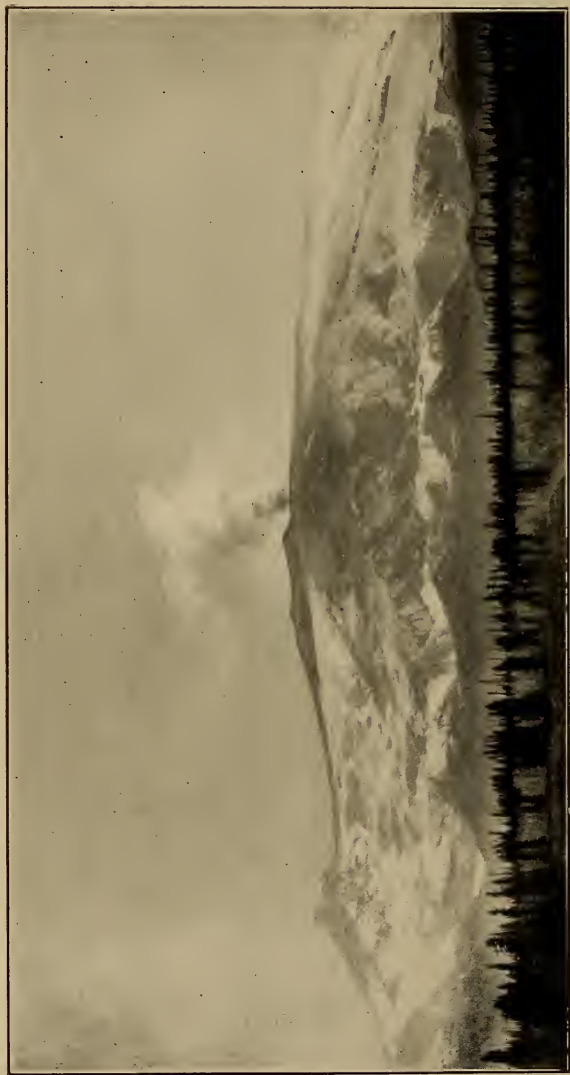
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*Mt. Wrangell.*

TRAILING  
*and* CAMPING  
IN ALASKA

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By ADDISON M. POWELL

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*This narrative is dedicated to the boys who clung  
to the alders while others left, condemning  
a country they knew nothing about.*



## INTRODUCTION

### *Hiyu Skookum!*

That is the Alaska Indian's expression for the incomparable, and it is here used because the white tourist will borrow the exclamation when he stands amidst the largest group of high mountains on the globe—where flowers bloom beside the most wonderful glaciers ever seen by man; when he looks upward at the perpendicular precipice of Mount Sanford's southern face, a mile straight above, where eagles flying in front of their nests resemble sparrows; when he watches the spiral smoke and steam of Unaletta's volcano; or when he gazes at the rainbow-colored waterfalls that descend, apparently, from the heavens.

This narrative was written by a follower of the trail, when there was one to follow, and not by a follower of a Longfellow, a Cooper or a Stevenson. It is told in the simple language of the trailers, and unnecessarily long words or elaborate descriptions have been avoided. In fact, many incidents which were commonplace to the author, but which might have proved interesting and unusual to the reader, have been curtailed or withheld in order not to interfere with the general character, or to become tedious by their added length.

## *Introduction*

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### *Hiyu Skookum!*

The mining man, also, will utter it to express his wonder when looking upon the most extensive mineral deposits that nature has ever disclosed to view; when watching the working of the greatest gold-quartz mine in the world; when realizing that if all other copper and tin mines were closed down, Alaska alone could supply the demand; and that her infantile existence, thus far, has been signalized by the production of three hundred million dollars in value.

The statesmen of the future will repeat it when Alaska is acknowledged to be richer in mineral wealth than all the states of the American Union put together; when it shall supply the whole of the United States with paper from its spruce forests, and fish from its waters; and when they appreciate its marvelous development since Secretary Seward was ridiculed for "buying an ice box."

The naturalist will exclaim "Hiyu Skookum!" when he beholds the prodigious growth of its vegetation, or the bones of those gigantic animals which once wandered through its forests when the earth was younger, the crust thinner and the climate warmer. The reader is invited to come with me, in his imagination, and camp amidst scenes which words can but partly describe, and when he visits Alaska in person, he, too, will exclaim "Hiyu Skookum!"



# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	PAGE
Meeting Captain I. N. West in San Francisco—Decided to Go to Alaska—The Loss of the Helen W. Alma—Seattle Experiences—A Pleasure Voyage—Landing at Valdez . . . . .	I

## CHAPTER II

The Return of Captain West—The Hanging of Tanner—Big John's Experiences with a Mule—A Trip Down the Bay—The Adventure of an Imprudent Man—A Mutual Understanding with a Bear . . . . .	21
--	----

## CHAPTER III

Crossing of the Valdez Glacier—A Profane Old Prospector—A Forest Fire—Along the Shore of Klutena Lake—A Tent Town of Salmon-dryers—Arrival at Copper Center . . . . .	37
---	----

## CHAPTER IV

Starting for the Alaskan Range—Swimming Horses Across the Copper River—An Indian Who Had Never Seen a White Man—A Marvelous Exhibition of Aurora Borealis—The Slahna River Country—Mentasta Pass . . . . .	50
--	----

## CHAPTER V

Among the Beaver Ponds—A Porcupine for Breakfast—Indian Albert's Camp—Creeping Up to the Wrong Bear—Back to the Slahna—A Battle with a Raft and the Rapids . . . . .	65
--	----

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER VI

	PAGE
Boating down the Copper River—Through the Rapids—Cutting a Rope with a Bullet—By Eyak back to Valdez—A Survey in a Snow-storm—Death of the Glacier-mushers . . .	77

## CHAPTER VII

A Rough-sea Voyage—A Pioneer's History of Juneau—How Juneau got its Name—The Treadwell Mines—Social Hotel Companions—The Tarku Winds . . . . .	97
--	----

## CHAPTER VIII

A Trip to Skagway—A Snoring Medley—Interviewing an Old-timer—His Love for His Dog—Riding the Town of the "Soapy Smith Gang"—The Murder of Bert Horten and Wife . .	108
--	-----

## CHAPTER IX

A Voyage to Sitka—Its Description and History—Interesting old Block Houses—Attending a Funeral—The Greek Catholic Church—A Beautifully Painted Picture . . . . .	121
--	-----

## CHAPTER X

Indian Totem Poles—A Poetical Spot—A Picturesque Old Highway—Mt. Edgecomb—A Visit to Yakutat—Indian Girls Selling Trinkets Aboard our Steamer . . . . .	133
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI

The Visit of Scientists to Alaska—The Return to Valdez—A Brave Rescue—I Act as Guide—A Chafing Restraint—Others Rush to the Tanana	138
--	-----

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XII

PAGE

- Missing a Bear—Exploring the Tekeil—Killing a Goat—The Perilous Voyage of Five Adventurers—A Sociable Bear—Starting on an Exploring Trip into the Alaskan Range . . . 146

## CHAPTER XIII

- In the Alaskan Range—The Indian Gokona Charley—In Sight of Captain West's Placers—The Snow-storm—The Ptarmigans—A Perilous Return . . . 160

## CHAPTER XIV

- The Rush of 1900—A Remarkable Boy—The Loss of the Schooner—A Musical Prodigy—Astonishing an Indian—Astonished by an Indian . . 174

## CHAPTER XV

- Exploring During the Summer of 1900—Ed. Dicky's Placid Temperament—Arrival at Slate Creek—A Peculiar Electric Storm—On the Head Waters of the Gokona—A Soliloquy . . . 186

## CHAPTER XVI

- The Doctor and his Porcupine—One Source of Two Rivers—Killing Two Bears and a Caribou—By Slate Creek to the Source of the Tanana—Crossing the Captain West Mud-glaciers—Killing Two Mountain Sheep . . . 199

## CHAPTER XVII

- A Grizzly Bear and a Foot-race—Exploring on the Nabesna River—A Lonely Grave and Its History—The Suslota Indians—The Return to the Coast—Buying a Skeleton of a Horse . . . 212

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XVIII

	PAGE
The Exhausted Stampeder—A Forest Fire—At Slate Creek—On the Head-waters of the Shusitna River—Discovering Both Coal and Gold—Back to Hospital Camp . . . . .	223

## CHAPTER XIX

Killing Two Caribou—Meeting a Tenderfoot—Quiggly up a Tree—The Colonel's Story—The Rolling-hill Country—Summer Experiences of Alaska Prospectors . . . . .	235
--	-----

## CHAPTER XX

"Shorty" Fisher Shot by an Indian—A Terrible Experience While Descending the Copper River—The Dangerous Ice-field—A Diet of Dog—Drifting Out to Sea—Bob Young's Dream . . . . .	249
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXI

In the Chitina River Country—Chititu Placers—The Photographing Party—The Discovery of the Bonanza Mine—A Great Copper Nugget—Prospecting Alone . . . . .	259
--	-----

## CHAPTER XXII

Killing a Mountain Sheep—Temperament of Wild Animals—Good Morning to a Wolverine—Recrossing the Copper River—Entertained by Indians—The Return to the Coast . . . . .	266
---	-----

## CHAPTER XXIII

The Ahtnas, or Stick Indians—Their Marriages and Superstitions—A Familiar Wail—An Interesting Peace Talk—A Philosophical Indian—His Prophecy . . . . .	282
--	-----

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XXIV

PAGE

- To the Head-waters of the Tanana—Three Bears—  
Killing a Mountain Goat—The Tanana Indians  
—A Foolish Experiment with a Grizzly—Agri-  
culture in the Copper River Valley . . . . 296

## CHAPTER XXV

- A Night's Experiences—Killing a Grizzly—The  
Wolverine—A Fish Story—Experiences of  
James Germansen—Killing Six Mountain  
Goats . . . . . 310

## CHAPTER XXVI

- The Life of the Mountain Goat—Watching One  
Make His Escape—A Female Grizzly with Three  
Cubs—Killing a Black Bear—Six Men Shot in  
Keystone Canyon—Other Fatalities . . . 327

## CHAPTER XXVII

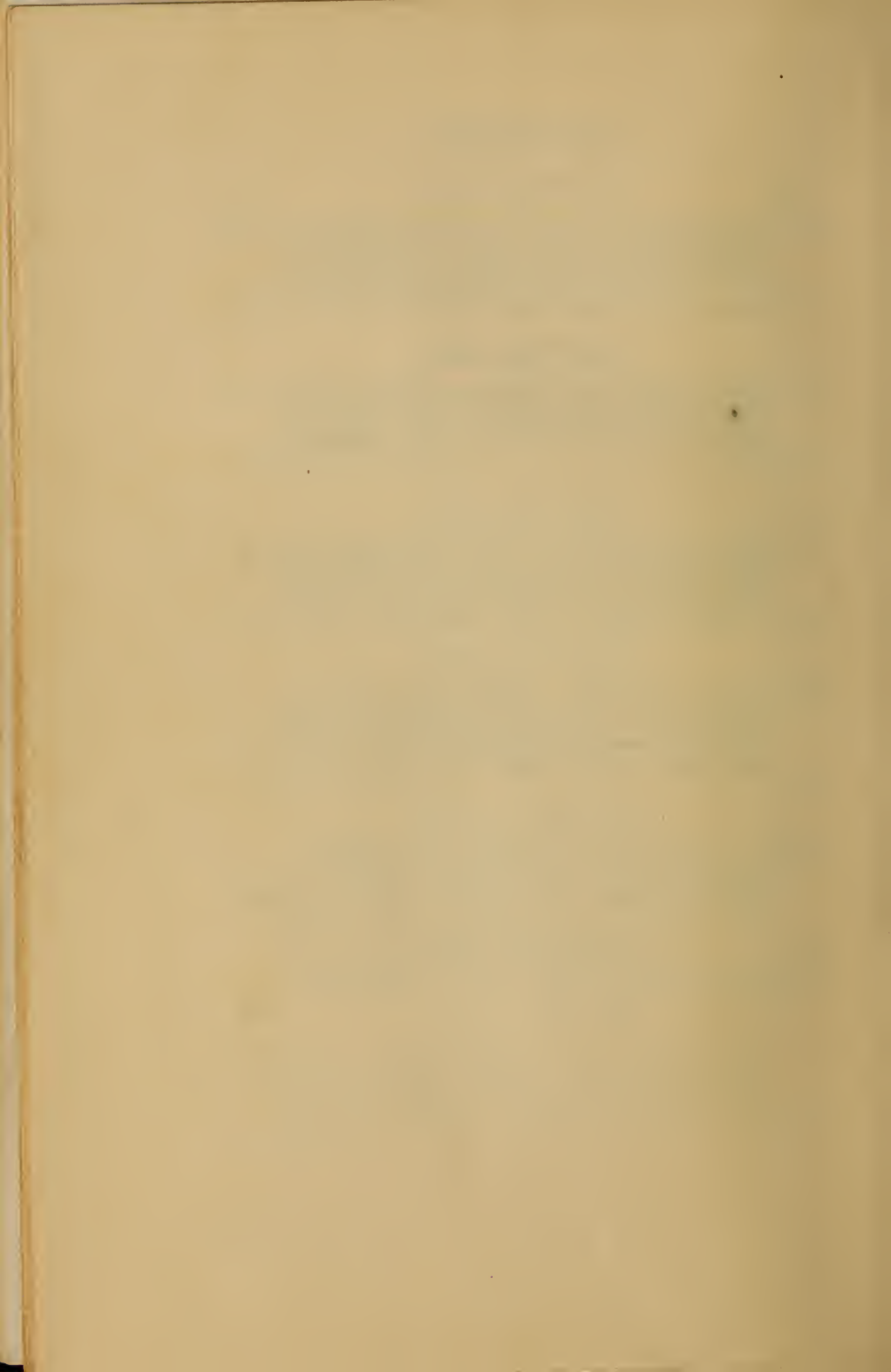
- Reminiscences and Campfire Stories—Chris and Nick's  
Bear-fight—The Bear-hunted Doctor and His  
Mischievous Companion—Easy Marks in Seattle  
—Big Ben and His Raft . . . . . 340

## CHAPTER XXVIII

- Leaving a Wonderland—The Storm—The Singers—  
Icy Straits—The Inside Voyage—Evidences of  
Prehistoric Mining in Alaska . . . . . 356

## CHAPTER XXIX

- A Detective—Some Statistics—Down to California—  
The End of the Trail . . . . . 369





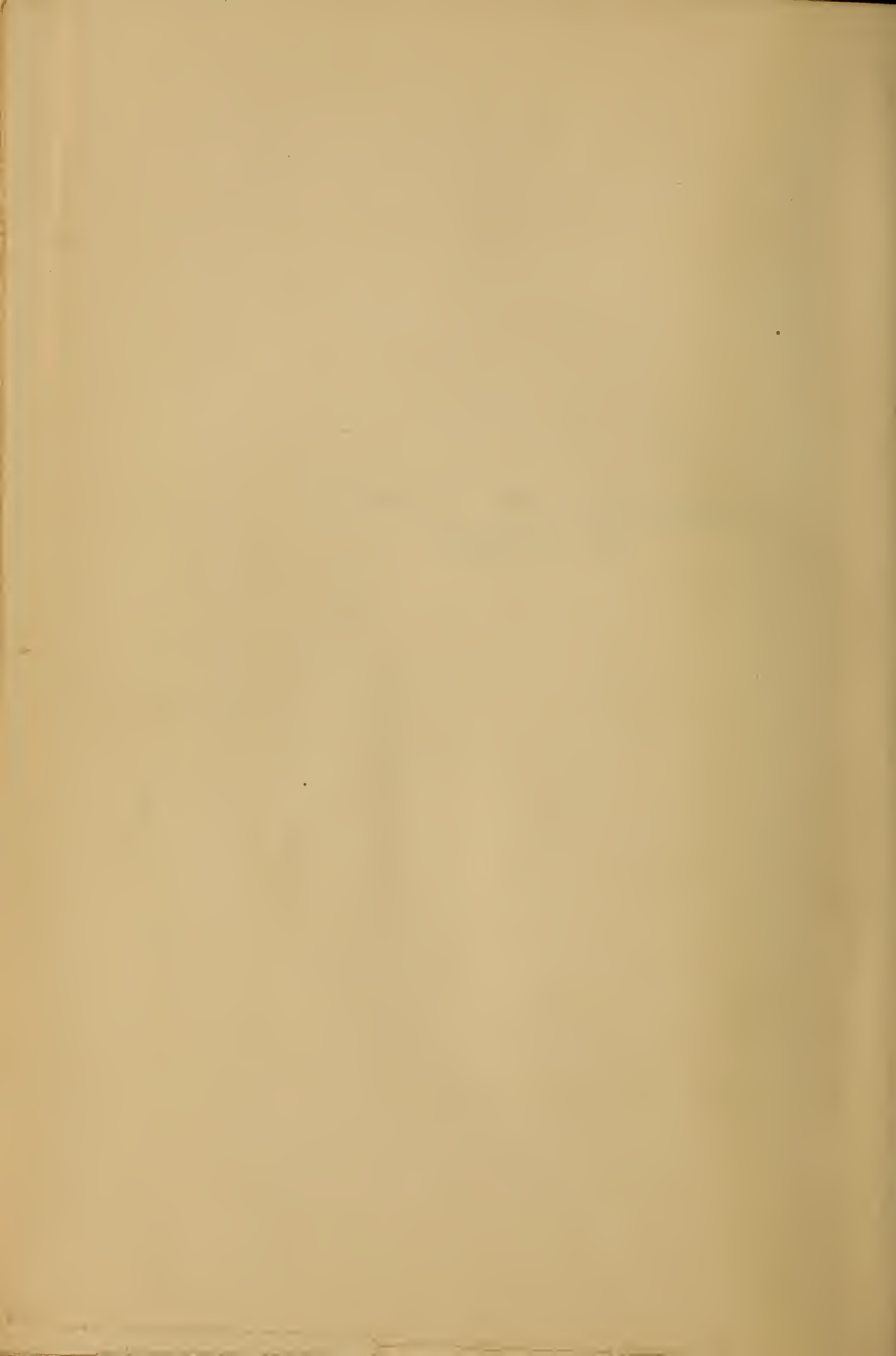
## ILLUSTRATIONS

✓ Mt. Wrangell .....	<i>Frontispiece</i>
✓ Valdez .....	FACING PAGE 21
✓ "Little Dog Pete" .....	27
✓ Reflection in Valdez Bay .....	32
✓ A Glacier Crevasse .....	38
✓ Horses Swimming Copper River .....	50
✓ Mt. Drum ( <i>seen through telescope</i> ) .....	56
✓ Fording a Dangerous Glacier Stream .....	62
✓ The Banks of the Copper River .....	77
✓ Juneau .....	100
✓ Skagway .....	108
✓ Sitka, Indian Avenue, Greek Church .....	130
✓ Totem Poles at Wrangell .....	134
✓ Keystone Canyon .....	144
✓ A Lake Scene .....	159
✓ Among the Mountains of the Alaskan Range .....	164
✓ Valdez, As We Left It .....	182
✓ Eselota and His Family .....	218
✓ Pack-Train Crossing on a Pole-Bridge .....	226
✓ Alaskan Caribou Swimming .....	233
✓ Camping in Copper River Valley .....	242
✓ The Dangerous Ice-Field .....	251
✓ The "Bonanza" Copper Deposit .....	263
✓ Copper Nugget on Nugget Creek .....	265
✓ Skin of Alaskan Grizzly .....	270
✓ An Indian Pack-Train .....	300
✓ James Germansen .....	318
✓ Camp Comfort Roadhouse .....	327
✓ Telling Camp-Fire Stories .....	340
✓ Greenville Channel .....	365





TRAILING AND CAMPING  
IN ALASKA



# Trailing and Camping in Alaska

## CHAPTER I

*He has not lived in vain who has caused a smile to blossom on the face of another.*

It was partly because of that favorite motto of mine that this narrative, which is descriptive of ten years spent in exploring, hunting and prospecting in Alaska, has been written. Looking backward, across that interval, for beginnings, recalls an incident that occurred in San Francisco in February, 1898. One day during my stay there, I was accosted by John D. Ackerman, who was, at that time, Chief Clerk in the United States Surveyors' office, and who offered me an opportunity that was, indeed, as agreeable as it was flattering.

"You're the very fellow I want to see. A man who is going to Alaska was in here this morning and asked me to recommend a Deputy United States Surveyor to go north with him. He proposes to bear all expenses, but he requires a man who is accustomed to roughing it and who is capable of frontiering it alone, if necessary. I told him that you were in the city, and that I would ask you to call on him at the International Hotel."

"Who is this man?" I inquired.

"He is Captain I. N. West, who has been a prospector and quasi-explorer. He spent three years in South America, and two in Alaska. One year he was in the Shusitna River country, and the other year was spent in the Copper River region. He claims he found a great deposit of gold and now is returning for it."

"When was he in that country?"

"I believe it was some time in the eighties."

"Well, it sounds rather fakish to me, but I shall call upon him this evening; that is one of those trips, you know, from which the best of us might never return."

I called on Professor Davidson of the State University, and from him obtained Lieutenant Allen's report of his trip through that country, because I desired to be prepared for false information, if this I. N. West should be inclined to give it. I confess I entertained doubts that any white man except Allen had ever been through that region.

At seven P. M. I called at his hotel and found him waiting for me. Upon entering his room he requested some gentlemen to retire, as he said he had important business with me. He then closed and locked the door and moved a small table over to the back part of the room, and spread a blue print upon it. Before he proceeded with the subject, he desired to know, in the event of my rejecting his offer, if I

would agree not to announce his secret for a limited time. He inquired also whether I ever had been bewildered; what I would take with me on such a trip; the kinds of guns and ammunition, and even what kind of matches I would take along.

During our talk I observed that he was a man of strong features and mentally pronounced him to be the one man among a thousand who would dare to undertake such a trip as he claimed to have made. He was more than six foot tall and gave his age as seventy-two years. He said he desired to locate some placer ground which he wished to have surveyed for patent, so that his family would be benefited thereby, as he expected never to return to that fabulously rich eldorado. He said:

“Once I cleared eighty thousand dollars in the Black Hills country. I let my family have all but ten thousand, which I spent while looking for another rich placer deposit, and at the very last I found enough gold for all of us. Although it was far away in the wilds of Alaska, I have worked for years with the constant expectation of returning to it some day. I have endeavored vainly to get financial aid, but the word Alaska has scared them away.

“I failed to find what I was looking for, in South America. When I started for the Copper River country, I engaged nine Yakutat Indians to accompany me. One had been in that country, and

could talk the Indian language of that region, and he could talk very good English. We skirted the coast until we arrived at a point about half-way between Malispina and Behring glaciers. From there we packed up the steep mountain range, crossed glaciers and descended a creek the Indians called Tana, meaning Trail, River. This emptied into the Chitina (Copper River) and it contained some placer gold, but owing to the glacier floods it is doubtful if it could be worked profitably.

“As rapidly as the stock of provisions was consumed, I would send two Indians back. I continued to do this until there was but one, my interpreter, with me. We ascended a river called the Chitistone (Copper Rock) and went through a pass, south of Mt. Wrangell, over to the head of White River, crossing to the head of the Tanana, and finally to the head of the Ahtna, or the river now known as the Copper River.

“At the southeast end of the Suslota Mountains, on the Tanana side, is where I tell my men that I have found the gold. Some old glacier moraines, which I call mud-glaciers, are there. You see I am compelled to tell them *something*, and if I should tell them the exact place, they would mutiny, and either go ahead or send some of their friends to beat me to it; so it is necessary that I guard against such trouble.

“We lived on sheep meat and wild parsnip-root,



until we arrived at Suslota Lake, and there we obtained all the dried salmon we could carry; after this we had fresh salmon nearly all the time.

"We descended the outlet of the Suslota to the Slahna River, and there got a boat from some Indians and drifted down to a grassy plot where there was an old Indian village, about three miles from the Copper River."

"The maps mark the outlet of the Suslota as emptying into the Copper River and not the Slahna," I said.

"There are no correct maps of that country, and Allen might have assumed it did that, but I say it empties into the Slahna about eight miles up from the mouth. Now, if you must wait for an appointment for Alaska, as you say, and should come later with a horse, I want you to come direct to this old abandoned Indian town. You'll find horse feed there, and I shall come down there every two weeks and pilot you to the discovery. I shall blaze a cottonwood tree, facing and in sight of the old Indian wickiups, and shall write my name there, and at the foot I shall bury a little can in which there will be a note.

"Well, we descended the Copper as far as the Chistochina River. There I discovered fine gold coming down that river, so we hid our raft in the brush, and spent two weeks up at the source. Now,

I will say that there is some placer up there somewhere, and I am going to leave my men in there to find it."

The peculiar emphasis with which he said this, together with the twinkle of his eye, caused me to wonder if his discovery were not on the head waters of the Chistochina.

"We returned as far as the Klutina River. From there we ascended to a lake which is about twenty miles long. Of course, there is no lake marked on the maps, but it is there, all the same. On the west side of this lake I am going to attempt to ascend a creek that leads over towards the Chistochina. I believe I can get through that way. From that lake we crossed the glacier over to Valdez Bay. We hoped to find a trading post there, but there was none, and we built a raft and floated with the tide, about twenty-five miles, to where we arrived at an Indian town. We were taken from here in *bidarkies* to Nutchek. The *Jeanie* soon arrived there on her return from a whaling cruise, and on it I returned to San Francisco.

"Now, let me tell you something about the discovery. The Indian found the first nugget, which he picked up with his hand. I then washed out considerable gold with my pan. I had to take it down nearly a quarter of a mile to where there was a little water at the junction of another creek. We found, on the mountain-side, a very rich pocket, and the In-



dian carried the gravel down in a sack. I continued to wash until I had panned out about six hundred dollars. The only thing that bothers me is the scarcity of water, but of course that is more plentiful in summer-time, as it was very late in the fall when we were there. Gold! Why, man—come up there and I'll pay you, not only for your trouble, but you shall have an interest with me, for there is gold enough for all of us."

"What direction did the drainage run from that mountain?" I asked.

"The gulch draining the hillside where we found the gold, ran southeasternly and emptied into a creek that ran westward. Now, what do you say to the proposition?"

To this I answered:

"To-morrow I shall bring a friend with me by the name of Stephens. I want you to meet him, so that you can leave any word with him for me when up at Valdez Bay. I shall see him off on the next boat with my outfit, except my horse. I shall write my application to be appointed Deputy Mineral Surveyor for Alaska, for the purpose of surveying out some mining claims of I. N. West. That will be sent off to-morrow. I shall be in Valdez in June, and shall attempt to cross over into the Copper River valley with the military expedition that is going in there."

I wired for Stephens, sent up my application, and,

within a week, I saw all hands off on the same boat. Sherman Stephens wanted adventure and so did I. Two months later, I was on my way to join the gold-seeking throng that was rushing northward, and I lingered for a few days in San Francisco before making the final plunge. While there the cry of a newsboy attracted my attention and I heard him say:

“Total loss! The *Helen W. Alma* goes down with forty souls!”

This old boat had been chartered to go to Valdez, Alaska, but when it struck the heavy seaswells it broke up, and all on board were lost. The only sign of the ship that the sea ever gave up was some rotten driftwood that floated on the surface.

This was the significant beginning of a life where the loss of one's comrades, I afterwards learned, would be a common occurrence. About every old sea relic had been put into commission to accommodate the northward rush. A short time after this, the *Jane Falkenburg* was abandoned on the coast of Behring Sea; the *Jane Gray* broke up in mid-ocean and many lives were lost; and the *Mermaid*, another old sea-coffin, was wrecked on the coast of Vancouver Island.

I traveled a thousand miles overland to Seattle, the metropolis of the northwest. Never again will that city be filled with such a mongrel lot of transients. They hailed from everywhere and were

dressed in all sorts of clothes. What the merchants advised them to buy for their northern trip was purchased without question. They bought furs and striped and variegated mackinaw clothing, and proud of their purchases, paraded the streets in most fantastic costumes.

I attempted to demonstrate that "a fool and his money are soon parted" by purchasing a cigar and burning some of mine. I invited a short, pumpkin-seed-shaped man to have one also. He had no legs to speak of, that is, they only had sprouted and then had evidently become discouraged and stopped growing. He said:

"How mad it does make me to have one of those gold-crazed idiots ask to what part of the North I am going! Why, I came near whipping a fellow yesterday who asked me that question. I tell you," and his neck began to swell, as he pounded his left hand with the clenched fist of the other, "I am going to remain right here, for no other purpose but to see the disappointed expression on the faces of those fooled fellows when they return from the North. That is what *I* am going to do!"

I walked over to a friend who was going North and said:

"I have discovered a curiosity and want you to examine it."

"Is it an animal?" he asked.

"Yes. Do you see that stump of a human with his

hat drawn down near to his boot tops and smoke puffing from under it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you will do me a favor if you will talk with him until you can find out to which part of the North he is going. You see, he is trying to keep it a secret, by pretending that he is not going North, but you can explain that you heard that he positively was going. You should be able to worm it out of so short a sawed-off block as that."

"I'll just enter the ring for one round, for your sake," he answered, and he approached the man.

They appeared to talk very earnestly for a while, then again I noticed the swelling of the little fellow's neck and he began to pound his left hand, and I heard him say:

"I have told you three times that I am not going North, and by——"

I had turned away, and failed to hear any more. Presently my friend came by me and as he did so he muttered:

"I'll be durned!"

He acted, after that incident, as if he thought I was trying to get him into trouble. It was several hours before I ventured to ask him what luck he had had in getting information from the man who lived so near mother earth, and then he replied:

"Do you suppose that I am such an idiot as to want the reputation of being whipped by that little

sawed-off block of insolence whose excuse for living cannot be seen below his hip-pockets? ”

I said: “ It is remarkable that a man in Seattle should openly deny that he cared to go North. Would you believe that I could shoot in any direction without hitting a man who intends to go to Alaska or to the Klondike? ”

“ Are you going to shoot? ”

“ No, I was only using the expression in a comparative way.”

“ I guess if you should let fly into that crowd across the street, you probably would wing a dozen of them.”

And I walked over to the crowd to see the attraction. It proved to be one of the many patented devices for “ saving ” gold, for sale in nearly every block in town, and finding ready purchasers. Experienced miners walked up, peeped at the machine, smiled and then walked away. There was one young man, however, who had made himself conspicuous by loading an express wagon down with rockers, plates, etc. My companion, who had been a life-long prospector, volunteered some information, saying:

“ My dear sir, you must have a mine already discovered? ”

“ No,” he replied, “ I have never been in a mining country in my life.”

“ Then wouldn’t it be advisable first to secure a



mine to work, before making such extensive purchases?" was asked.

"Now, see here, old fellow, do you think I'm fool enough to be going North for fun? Do I look like it? I will tell you, right now, sir, I'm going to have a mine before I am in Alaska six weeks."

"I sincerely hope you will, but are you not aware that an ordinary sluice-box is all that a miner needs for washing out placer gold?"

"Very well, please tell me what a sluice-box looks like, and where I can get one, and I will buy that, too."

The foolish fellow was buying everything any one suggested, and knew no more about mining than did his shadow. There were hundreds of that particular kind going North. Seattle hotel men and merchants were reaping a harvest. Even pickpockets were doing a lucrative business, as that city had a so-called Klondike of its own. The few days spent in Seattle were amidst surging, wild-eyed stampeders, who were hopefully roofing castles in the air. Most of those visionaries returned from the North within six months, dejected, tattered and forlorn, indicating by their appearance the many hardships they had endured and their dire disappointments.

I left Seattle on May 12, on the steamer *Valencia*, with my outfit, horses and hopes. That steamer was afterwards wrecked on the coast of Vancouver, Jan.

25, 1906, with a loss of 133 lives. We glided over Puget Sound, so named after Lieutenant Puget, and landed at Nanaimo, B. C., where we spent a day, coaling. A few passengers visited the mines, while others wandered about and smelled the dogwood blossoms as large as saucers. After sailing two days along the coast of Vancouver, and other islands, we left British waters by crossing Dixon's Entrance and entering Alaska. Dixon was another English navigator whose explorations assisted the British in a contest with Russia, France and Spain for the Pacific seaboard.

We stopped at Hunter Bay, Alaska, for several days, unloading supplies at a fish cannery. Here the Indians swarmed over the boat, and peeped in at the dining-room and cushioned seats, grunting their astonishment, and clucking, snorting and spitting that guttural language of theirs at each other. The language of the coast Siwash is a combination of Chinook, Aleut, facial grimaces and snorts. One would think it impossible to talk the conglomeration without choking, unless trained to it from infancy, but it isn't. A handsome young woman, who was teaching a mission school near by, came on board, and the fluency with which she exhibited her linguistic accomplishment in the tongue of the Siwash was astonishing. Such an attempt would have given me the lockjaw.

I saw a white squaw, who had light colored hair

and blue eyes, possibly a quarter-blood, sitting in a dug-out canoe. She would not speak a word of English and deserved pity, as she had a very dark Indian for a husband and several equally dark children.

This Hunter Bay is in a more southern latitude than are the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Glasgow and Edinburg. From Hunter Bay to Point Barrow, Alaska, the distance equals that from Chicago to New Orleans. From here to Alaska's most western island is as far as across the United States from Savannah to Los Angeles. The climate of Hunter Bay is more uniform than at any place in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, and its winter is warmer than that of most of the Southern States.

While here, the slow, continuous rain, so characteristic of Alaska's coast, began falling. We passengers went hunting and killed nothing. We became familiar, however, with swampy hillsides where moss held water like a sponge, and we found devil clubs and skunk cabbages. Devil clubs are a thorny exemplification of the Imp, and, if touched, will leave little needles, about the size of those of a cocklebur, to be picked out of the fingers for a week after. The skunk cabbage is a favorite food of wild geese and ducks. Occasionally a spruce hen flew among the trees, and deer beds were seen here and there, at the roots of the hemlock and spruce.



The gloomy weather impressed us with dismal forebodings, but our impressions of grandeur and sublimity were yet to come. When we left Hunter Bay, the steamer gave three long whistles that echoed from mountain to mountain, from canyon to canyon and across the smooth water.

The charm of Alaska began gradually to steal upon us. We gazed for days at the mountains and their reflections on the water. We watched the boiling wake of the ship, the ripple forming a V, the prow of our boat being the apex. The distant lines of the ripples washed the shore on both sides. One never tires looking at the scenery of an inside voyage to Alaska. It is then, if ever, one enjoys a good smoke, and is willing to share the pipe of peace with all mankind. The inside passage, as here referred to, is the route that leads behind the islands from Puget Sound to Sitka, and is away from the ocean swells.

We glided through Wrangell Narrows and past old Fort Wrangell, where the Russian Baron Ferdinand P. Von Wrangell defied the British and by the firing of cannon disputed their right to land. His long name would have been sufficient for me. I know I could never fire on a name like that. This act of his probably saved Alaska for the United States, for, if the Russian bear had been less aggressive, Canada would now hold the preponderance of North America. The dispute was finally settled in 1839.

Aggressive Englishmen show great self-reliance when traveling with authority from home. It has been said that Warren Hastings, when he went to India to collect a fine which had been levied on the Rajah, sent for the Rajah to come aboard his vessel and he came. Hastings was more fortunate in India than were the Englishmen, Derzhaven and Bernard, in Alaska. They sent for the Chief of the Koyukans to come to their camp and bring them his two daughters. This chief was unused to being sent for, but he came, declaring that "the salmon would drink blood before they returned to the sea." Yes. He came, but he introduced himself by cutting out the intestines of the over-confident Englishmen and burying their bodies on the bank of the Yukon.

Such thoughts came to us as we glided among mountains clothed with spruce forests at the foot, and their bald heads with white caps. The scenery did not change until we arrived at Sitka, on the edge of the wide ocean, then Alaska's capital. From Sitka we crossed to Prince William Sound, and for forty-eight hours our vessel rolled and pitched, and so did we, both without and within, with no land in sight except the distant tips of Mounts Fairweather and St. Elias.

A dyspeptic friend of mine on board was so sure he would be seasick that probably he had been ill with apprehension for a week before he had embarked on this voyage. He retired to a room that

the purser had assigned him, evidently for the purpose of being sea-sick, but it was not the room his ticket called for. I had endeavored to persuade him to go ashore at Nanaimo, at Hunter Bay and at Sitka, but he would not, because it might interfere with his expected sea-sickness.

He and the purser were almost mortal enemies. He stubbornly demanded the room that his ticket called for, then occupied by some ladies, even if the purser threw the women overboard. He was dissatisfied with the unlucky number of the one he was then occupying, and was desperate. With a resolve to make peace, I visited this invalid, and solemnly announced that the purser was regaining his mind.

"How is that?" was asked. I had done this to excite his curiosity, and therefore continued:

"The poor fellow has become nearly insane from having fallen over a precipice of love, and fearing a relapse, his people have secured this position for him, hoping that it may assist him on the road to recovery."

"Are you positive about that?" he asked.

"Certainly. I have known him for years, and am pleased to observe that he is recovering," I answered.

"I was sure that something was the matter with him all the time," replied the invalid.

Then I went on deck and accosting the purser, said:

"See here, purser, that invalid friend of mine——"

"Hold on there!" announced the purser, "he is no invalid!"

"Yes, my dear fellow, he is in mind. Now I will give you this information in strictest confidence. He bogged down in pure love not long since and it has so affected his mind that his people have sent him along in my charge, hoping that the change and trip would benefit him. Of course we know he should be locked up, but I hope that in time he may fully recover. I am telling you this, so that you may be prepared for any sudden turn he may take, and hope you will be as considerate with him as possible."

"Well, well! Isn't it singular, I never thought of *that*?" said the purser. "Why, any one could see from another ship that he was insane! It's just as plain as day, now. Say, I am much obliged to you for that information."

There, I had gained friendship by sinfully lying, but the Good Book has blessed the peacemakers. If I could only manage to keep peace between these two, I was satisfied. The next day I visited my friend and found him really sick. To console him I told him that Longfellow had loved the sea so well he had written

"How often—Oh, how often  
I have wished that the ebbing tide  
Would bear me away on its bosom  
To the ocean wild and wide!"

This sick friend of mine then raised himself and said:

"Longfellow was a blamed fool!"

The conversation was then turned to the purser. He assured me that the purser was rapidly recovering his mental faculties, as he had visited him, and had found him in the best of humor.

When again we were on quiet water, the purser approached and said:

"Say, that was a capital idea sending that fellow up here. He is rapidly getting better, and he is a nice sort of chap, I imagine, when in his right mind."

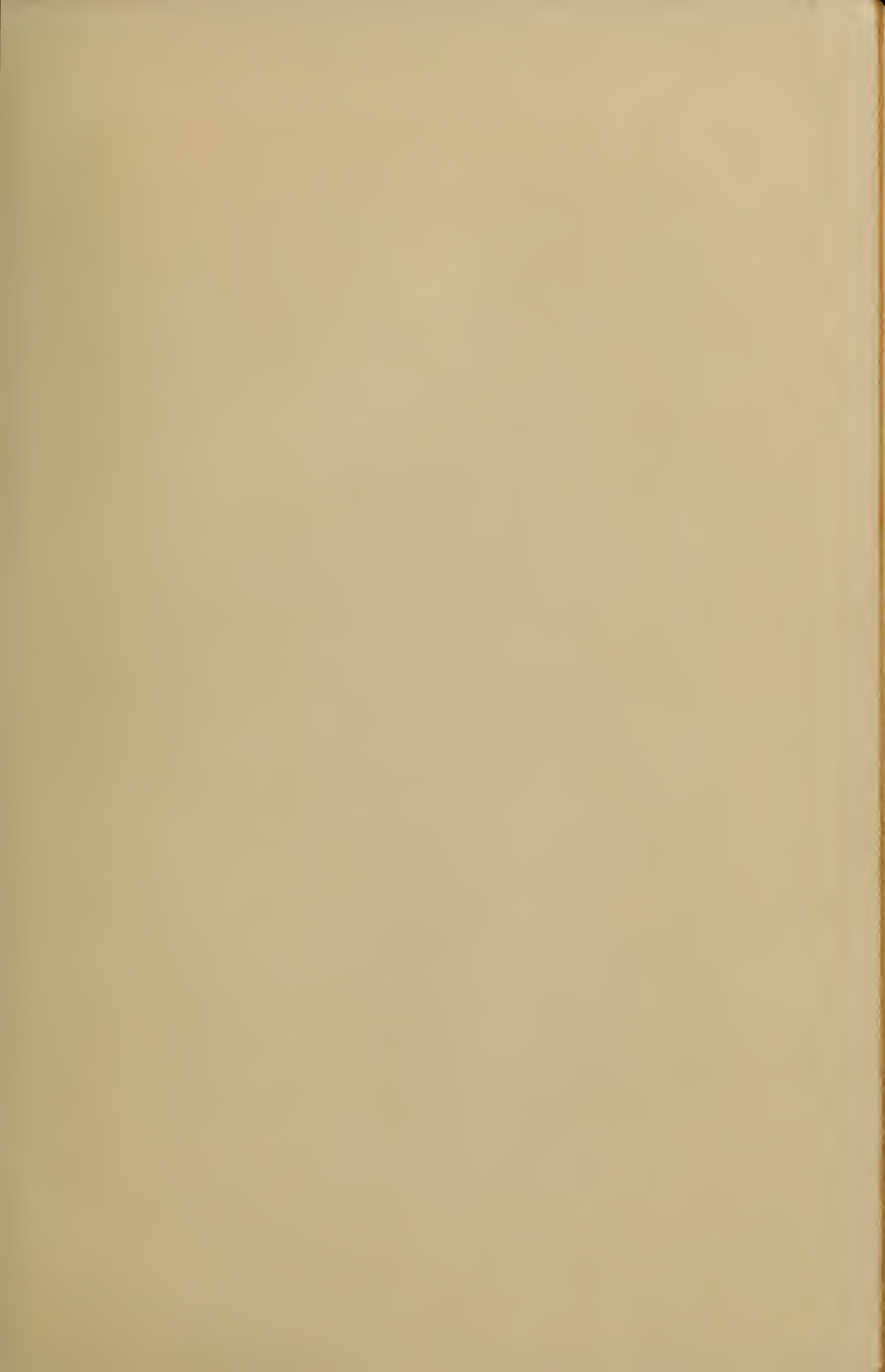
This incident made me wonder if affairs in the world would not turn more smoothly if each individual treated all others with proper regard to possible mental weaknesses.

Another personal friend on this ship was remarkably tall and slim. He was long for this world, but had a slim chance. When we were on quiet water he was conspicuous, but he absented himself so successfully when the sea was rough, that I entertained the fear he had fallen overboard. As our boat floated smoothly on Valdez Bay, he reappeared, very much resembling a rawhide string that had been watersoaked and then stretched to its limit and dried. As he stood on the bow of our vessel, I suggested that the people would imagine he was our flagpole. He replied dramatically that he was no flagpole,

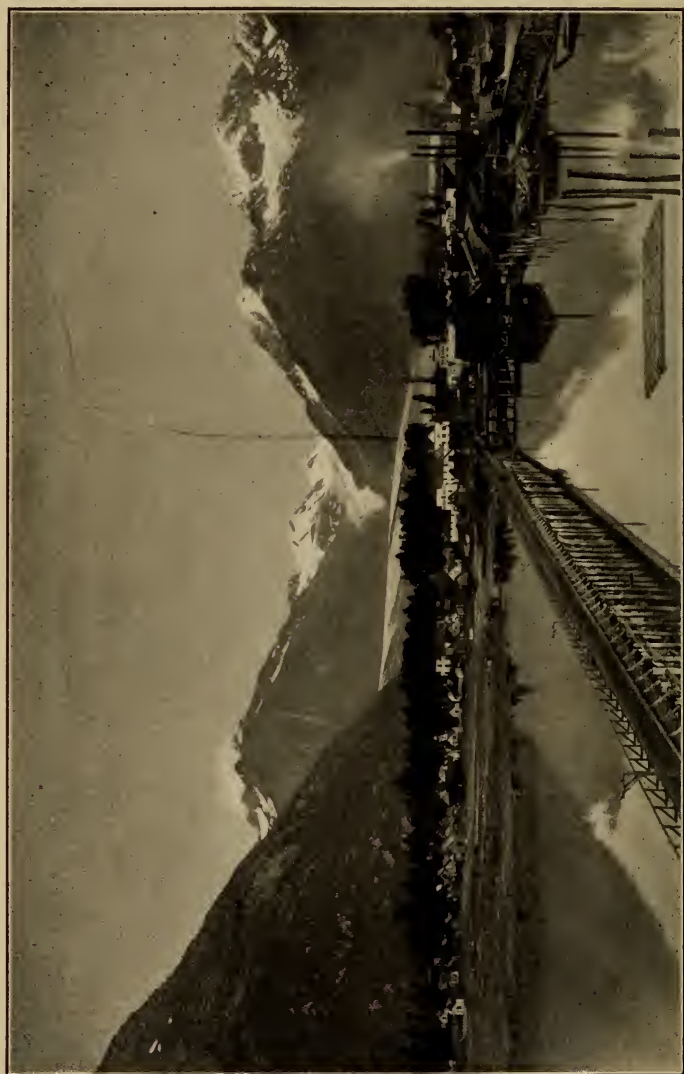


but a living demonstration of the geometrical perpendicular.

We landed, May 29, 1898, in the little tent town of Valdez, which is about three thousand miles north and west of San Francisco. At this time my only possessions were a year's supply of provisions and twenty-five cents in money. The only cash transaction that I performed during the first summer in Alaska, was the transferring of that quarter from one pocket to another. I did that with due consideration, conservatism and business acumen, deliberately studying the possible loss through bad pockets and otherwise.







*Valdes.*

## CHAPTER II

*If the climate of Alaska is a tonic, many have lost their lives taking overdoses of it.*

MR. STEPHENS came on board and informed me that Captain West had returned after a vain attempt to reach his discovery. He had become very ill and had been hauled out on a sled; in a very weak condition he had been placed on a steamer that was departing for the States. He had asked when I was expected, and had murmured:

“ Oh, if I only could talk to him! ”

I landed the next day after he had departed. It is probable that if we had met he would have disclosed to me the exact locality of his discovery. However, I resolved to remain with the country and make an attempt to find it, and, if successful, to see that he or his heirs shared a portion of it.

The ice had broken up and had left him stranded in the Tazlina country. It was reported that West died soon after arriving home.

The great Valdez glacier appeared to be at the edge of the little tent town, but really it was five miles away. The mountains appeared scarcely a mile from us, and from twelve to fifteen hundred feet high, yet they were from three to five miles distant and from three to five thousand feet in altitude.

About four thousand people had landed there, three thousand or more of them had crossed the glacier, and many had recrossed during the last month to return home disgusted. The hungry glacier had been the death of some of them and its cracks were gaping for more. We felt that we were up against the toughest proposition of our lives and those who had been there a month knew that we were.

Most of those who had come to prospect were no more adapted to the vocation than a coyote would be to herd sheep. That Alaskan trail wound over the glacier, where young and old, the wise and otherwise, the opulent and the poverty-stricken traveled together. Primogeniture labels were at a discount. Many seemed inspired only by the incentive to escape from that eternal bondage of civilization which makes servants of us all—even down to the demands of etiquette. There were avaricious dreamers, “spirit-haunted with ominous sounds of clinking coin, and the metallic laughter of grimacing goblin accountants.” Men of talent and virility were on their way possibly to the sacrifice of everything, including their lives, among those mountains of solitude—and all for the alien god of gold. The strenuous spirit was here as a delirious reality.

There were a few amusing incidents that occasionally relieved the homesick ones at Valdez. A Colorado man had a mule which insisted on leading every

one that took hold of his rope. The obstinacy of remote generations had been developed to this final combination of horse and donkey, where Nature has decreed it a useless waste of energy to allow the joke to continue beyond the mule. One of the picked men, "Big" John, who had been detailed with Captain, now Colonel J. R. Abercrombie, of the United States Army, to explore the Copper River country, possessed the one cardinal characteristic of the mule which enabled him to hold on to a thing, but it was with difficulty he could let loose.

It was decided to teach the mule to submit to the control of man by allowing "Big" John to do the dictating. As "Big" John took hold of the rope, the mule concluded to do some dictating himself. He immediately started down the trail, which had been worn about three feet deep in snow that had not yet melted away. As the rope tightened, John's feet went high in air and his back acted as a sled-runner.

"Here we go!" yelled John.

As he approached our tent he added:

"Here we come!"

As he crossed a small stream of water and scooted spray on his locomotive in front, he loudly announced:

"We've crossed the creek!" Then he added:

"Head us off!"

Several men ran to where the trails crossed and,

by waving hats caused the mule to shy at right angles, and John called back:

"We took the other trail!"

When the mule and John were finally stopped, John stood up, wiped some blood off his hands and remarked:

"We've had a h—l of a time!"

Those soldiers had been detailed to explore the route from Valdez to the Yukon. They were conspicuous in their efforts, and often returned from exploring trips without food and with very little clothing.

Every out-going steamer was loaded down with the quitters, who, as prospectors, were helpless incompetents. To avoid being ridiculed, they pretended to be returning for horses, larger outfits or more assistance from home. One young man, to have an excuse, said he was returning for more cigarette papers. One man there thought his outfit complete with five sacks of beans and one sack of flour. He was referred to as "the Bostonian," although he said he came from St. Paul.

We began to long for home cooking. One crowd complained to their cook, "Cockney Jim," and demanded pie.

"Pie!" exclaimed Jim.

When he recovered from the shock, he stuffed dried fruit between two flapjacks and sewed the edges together with a twine string, and the feat was



accomplished, to the credit of "Cockney Jim" ever after.

When a man was seen whittling, it generally was conceded to be an indication that he was going out on the next boat. Hundreds daily trailed into town, so foot-sore, after traveling over that twenty-eight miles of solid ice, that their crippling walk caused them to be referred to as "The Glacier Striders." Those who came over during the melting of the snow had lost their outfits, either while boating the Klutena rapids, or before they had arrived at Klutena Lake.

The snow that covered the crevasses had become too rotten to be safe, and those who crossed told of jumping cracks with spring-poles. If they had slipped they would have been put in cold storage forever, hundreds of feet below. The glacier was a succession of sharp ridges, with deeply washed erosions on each side, which made them nearly impassable. Men who crossed over claimed that all of Alaska's gold would not tempt them to do so again. They had felt secure while crossing in winter, but had not suspected the dangers that are presented in summer.

Two men, named Eddy and White, of Los Angeles, California, to obviate the necessity of going around a large crevasse, crossed on a bank of snow that was clinging to the opposite side. Often the wind drifts these snow-cappings across a crack in



such a manner that it is thick on one side and runs to a feather-edge on the other. At this place the snow had melted away until it had left a space of four feet between it and the ice on their side.

"I believe I'll test the strength of that snow by jumping onto it," announced Eddy.

"Well, if it doesn't hold, you can figure out why it failed to hold while you are dropping down through that cold space below," replied White.

"I'm going to jump and leave the figuring to you, so here goes!"

White stood in trembling astonishment while Eddy made the leap. It held! Eddy crossed in safety and called back:

"Have you got it figured out, White?"

"Yes, but I am going to lighten my load by sending my thoughts to heaven before making that leap."

White followed safely. After they had walked but a few steps, they looked back and were amazed to discover that they had jarred the snow bank loose and it had fallen in.

The unusually late snowfall had caused slides to descend the mountains with roars of destruction. Never before or since have I heard such roaring as broke the silence of the mountains during the spring of 1898. We knocked at those mountain barriers for admission to the interior, and they, like the gates





*"Little Dog Pete."*

of hell described by Milton, "grated harsh thunder" in response.

While some people were camped beside the trail on the glacier, near the foot of the mountain, they heard the approach of an avalanche. Most of them escaped, but eight were dug out from beneath that snow-slide and two were dead. One profane old prospector cursed when he heard it coming, but it was too late, and he was buried under it. When he was rescued he cursed again. When I mentioned the glacier to him in Seattle, ten years after this incident, he swore some more.

There was a little Llewellyn puppy dug from that snow-slide. He came out with his head and tail up, and has had them up most of the time since. He lived to acknowledge me as his friend and master, for he became my trail companion for years. He is retired now on a life pension in California, and when we meet he acts as if he thought we were the two best dogs that ever ascended the Copper River.

Connecticut furnished a visionary company made up of persons who were distinguished from the others by having brought a steam-sled. All they wanted was to have the right direction pointed out to them, and they would steam over the glacier, ascend the Copper River, and stampede Indians, white men and every other thing encountered. Strangers, after looking at the ponderous affair, retired to a safe distance with an expression of mis-

giving. When the machine was steamed up and properly directed, the owners looked at each other disappointedly, for it failed to move. They applied the full limit of steam and it stood still some more, while the joke began to settle on Connecticut. The citizens should preserve that steam sled from vandalism as an evidence of the rushers of 1898. It had the record of being the first automobile in Alaska and was never guilty of exceeding the speed limit.

Peace and good deportment were the general rules here. Although there was a man hanged for killing two others, the lesson evidently affected all those who traveled that trail. This hanging was performed by the first crowd to land on Valdez Beach.

The man who was hanged claimed that his name was "Doc" Tanner. He had joined a party of eight which had hailed from Massachusetts. One of the number by the name of Thorpe, so it was said, had become so indolent as well as overbearing towards the quiet-mannered Tanner, that the final culmination was a shooting scrape. This party of eight was known as the Lynn party, and as they had "grub-staked" Tanner, because he had camp-life experience, they insisted that he perform the drudgery.

Thorpe, Call and Lee, members of the party, were in consultation about dismissing Tanner, because of the scarcity of supplies, and turning him out to shift

for himself. This party and a few others had been the first to land, and to be turned out without anything at this time, in mid-winter, meant death. Tanner overheard the conversation, and drawing his gun walked into the tent where they were and began shooting. Call and Lee were instantly killed by being shot through the head, but as the candle was extinguished then, the third shot missed Thorpe, who fell over, and he, the one Tanner most desired to kill, escaped.

Tanner, thinking he had killed all three, surrendered his revolver to W. S. Amy. There was a meeting of a few who were there, and Tanner was given a fair trial, with a man by the name of King acting as chairman. After Thorpe was sworn and testified, the Judge said:

"Tanner, step forward."

Tanner walked to the front and quietly began rolling a cigarette.

"What is your name?" inquired King.

"Well, Judge, I guess this-here name of Tanner will answer me for the rest of my days, which, from the looks of this crowd, seem to be very few," answered Tanner, looking straight at the Judge.

"Did you hear Thorpe tell his story just now?"

"Well, I guess I did."

"What have you to say to it? Did he tell the truth?"

"Yes, I reckon he did," drawled Tanner.



"Do you mean to say you killed those men without a reason or cause?"

"Well, Judge," he replied, "that is just according to the way you look at it. You see, this—here bunch of shoemakers picked me up at Seattle when I was broke, and because they financed me a few dollars to enable me to get up to this God-forsaken country, they thought they owned me. They seemed to think that I should do all the dirty work, and I stood for it, but when I overheard their plans to chuck me out, like a dog, and cut me off from camp—me, a white man, with nothing but this cold white world about, and from that herd of mavericks from Massachusetts, too, why,—then some kind of buzzin' gets into my head and I saw red, and I just swiped out my gun and let 'em have it."

At this statement he quietly began puffing his cigarette.

"Is that all you have to say?" asked the Judge, after a moment's silence. "Have you any folks, or is there anything you wish to tell about yourself?"

"No, I reckon not," replied Tanner. "I have been kicked from hell to breakfast ever since I can remember, and there are none to sit up nights worrying about me; so if you fellows are going to hang me, better go ahead and have it over."

A vote was taken, and it was decided unanimously to hang Tanner. He was led to a leaning cotton-

wood tree, where he was asked for his last statement. He answered:

"Nothing, except that you are hanging the best pistol shot that ever came to Alaska."

Thorpe attempted to place the rope around Tanner's neck, but appeared too weak, and trembled with fright, possibly because he knew that he in a measure had been to blame. He was pushed to one side by a stronger man, and soon Tanner's body was dangling in the air.

His body was buried beneath the tree, not far from where were buried the two bodies of Call and Lee. The true name of Tanner probably never will be known, but like many another man whose identity has been lost in the western swirl, his friends will never learn what became of him.

The almost continuous sunshine of June caused the snow to disappear quickly. Vegetation grew more rapidly than would be expected outside of the tropics. Persons from southern climes cannot realize the rapid growth of the grass during Alaska's summer. The Alaska salmon-berry bushes bloomed, and the magpies and robins made their appearance. The June days increased in length until the nights were not worthy of the name. Even the chickens, that had been brought up there by Mr. and Mrs. Beatty, appeared to me to become bow-legged, while standing around waiting for darkness to indicate their roosting-time. We could read common print at mid-

night on the 21st day of June, and it was as much like a cloudy day as it was like the twilight.

I took a trip down the bay in the company of two soldiers, and we rowed down in a "take-down" tin boat. It was so bolted together that if a nut should come off, or a bolt break, there would be nothing left to hold up the passengers except their hats. This trap managed afterwards to drown two men.

The accompanying photograph shows what an inhospitable looking country this was for persons to pitch camp, yet a month later, at the time when we took this trip, it looked very differently.

This beautiful land-locked Bay of Valdez quietly nestled between high mountains that reflected their outlines in its mirror-like surface. The wild ducks rested here and there with their heads under their wings; away off on one side, near the shore, a flock of sea gulls noisily applauded some wise remark of an old coot; and the voice of the loon could be heard above the others.

We had crossed a stretch of nine miles of water when we landed on a grassy nook at the foot of a precipitous mountain spur. After supper, one of the trio attempted to climb to a ledge of white spar, that plainly could be seen from the camp. After an hour's hard work of clinging to moss-covered rocks, he succeeded in arriving at the place, but it proved a disappointment to the prospector. He then saw he could not descend without eyes in his toes. If



*Reflection in Valdez Bay.*





he could ascend a few hundred feet he might lower himself down a draw by the assistance of scattering alder brush. Another hour was spent in getting to that place, only to discover a precipice in the expected way of descent.

There was another slim chance left, and that was to continue climbing for the top of the spur, far above. No living man could have clung to the face of that precipice a minute, if it had not been for the moss that was rooted in the small crevices. He continued climbing until about 10 P. M., when he paused to look down on the campfire and the water, far below, a distance of fully one thousand feet. He felt a sickness coming over him, so he changed his gaze to the rock wall, a foot from his face.

A gun was fired down at camp, and this adventurer clung to the precipice with one hand, drew his revolver with the other and answered it. That would prove to his companions that he was in hearing distance and not calling for help, for if so, he would have fired first. He was not directly above camp, and the loose rocks would go bumping and tumbling down until out of hearing.

When near the summit, he found himself against a perpendicular wall, about twelve feet high. There appeared to be a small bench on top of this, where he could rest if once there. He rested on a large rock that lay at the foot of the wall; with his knife he then cut niches for finger and toe holds. Hold-



ing on to these, he climbed up and worked at digging a trench through the moss on the rim above, so that when up there, he could draw his body through. He was compelled to descend to the rock occasionally and brush the weight of detritus from it; for that shaky rock was liable to fall out of its position, and if it did, his life would be lost.

After he had finished his work above, he descended to the rock for a long rest before the final effort. He then nerved himself, placed his fingers in the niches, and drew himself from the rock which, with the pressure of the departing foot, said good-bye and went bumping down, down, down. The man was left clinging to his niches, hope, future and life above, with jagged rocks, more than a thousand feet of space, the deep sea and sure death below.

Large drops of sweat came out on his forehead as he steadily worked up, up, and held with one hand while he dug the other in the moss above. Half of his body finally rested on the edge while the other half hung in space without a foothold, and it seemed impossible to extricate himself from that position until he spied an alder an inch in diameter, which had grown on this little flat bench apparently for the only purpose of extending assistance on this occasion. Its strength was tried, and it enabled the climber to pull himself up and to rest on this ten-by-ten mossy bed alongside of the alder, where he

thought of childhood days, friends far away and his own folly.

There was but one way out of this place, and that was along a narrow shelf about one hundred feet to the westward which ended on the sloping ridge. There was a perpendicular precipice below and a jagged wall above. Along the side of this wall one could rub his body, by holding on to those jagged places and watching for secure footing on the six-inch path. He took off his shoes and attempted that sloping path, but it was necessary not to look down from his dizzy height to the distant campfire.

The feat was accomplished finally and this thankful mortal lay on the green grassy ridge in complete collapse. His aneroid barometer recorded 2140 feet above the sea, and his watch indicated 12.30 A. M.

Alaska's June midnight made it unnecessary to light a match to take those readings. He then attempted to walk out on a point where, by holding to an alder, he could look at the dizzy scene below, but he could not,—he had lost his nerve. Before this incident, if I had been told that a man could scale that precipice, I would have considered my informer—if not too large—a liar. Eight years after this incident a young doctor fell hundreds of feet to his instant death while attempting to climb the summit of that same range.

I descended along this spur, swinging from one

alder to another, and once more found myself on level ground. There a bear and myself were placed in an awkward position, but by judicious management we avoided further embarrassment. He snorted once and I snorted three times; he ran in one direction and I ran in another. Snorts were not the passwords of our society. I arrived in camp in time for breakfast, and a third solemn resolve was made never to be caught on the face of another precipice.

### CHAPTER III

*Mosquitoes have hatched out on glaciers and so have other kinds of trouble.*

PORTABLE bridges were placed across the glacier cracks to enable Lieutenant Lowe to cross with horses, on July 13. Stephens accompanied him on this trip with the first pack-train to go from Valdez to the Yukon. This glacier melts away at the lower end, or recedes, about 60 feet each year. It is probable that it was breaking off into the bay 300 years ago, and in about A. D. 2500 those who care to do so may be able to ride through this scarified canyon without encountering any ice, but we belonged to the stampeding age and could not wait.

Napoleon's cavalry crossed the Alps and Abercrombie's crossed the Valdez glacier. This expedition, accompanied by several adventurous prospectors, left on the 5th of August. The amount of first-class profanity that gushed from ordinarily moral men, under the provoking circumstances, was astonishing. The same voluble profane prospector, who had been rescued from the snow-slide, was with us. He laboriously contended with the argumentative disposition of a donkey having a will of its own, and that fact added materially to the driver's already extensive vocabulary.

The old prospector slipped upon his first attempt to climb the ice, and then and there he opened his dictionary of profanity and swore that he never was moral and never intended to be. A neatly dressed young lady, who was taking camera pictures with the party, happened to be near when there was trouble, and she heard swearing according to ritual. All kinds of maledictions were applied to the donkey, which had a good case of libel, for he reflected upon her moral character and endowed her with certain attributes of the cow. When he discovered the camera girl within a few feet of him, the old prospector apologized by swearing he "didn't know a woman was along."

That effort was too much for him, however, for he slipped, fell and slid several feet, and then he "did" swear in earnest. The ice was an ethereal blue, but not half so highly colored as was the atmosphere immediately surrounding that prospector.

"A picture of this scene would be incomplete without a phonograph," she remarked as she walked away.

All day we trudged on solid ice and jumped yawning crevasses. We camped on the ice during that short August night, as it was too dark to travel. The spring snow-slides and glacial hydraulics had deposited huge boulders on this ice river, and they had melted large wells straight down. A few of those





*A Glacier Crevasse.*





wells were closed, or, like an inverted cone, had gradually narrowed to a point and now were filled with water. The rock that had formed this kind of a well had melted its way down, while the well had closed gradually behind it by freezing. Streams of water poured into the apparently bottomless ones, and into some of those we dropped large rocks, but never heard one strike bottom.

The glacial hydraulic is caused by a pressure of water brought down beneath the ice, and forced up through some crack. When this occurs, gravel and sometimes large rocks are forced to the surface and are deposited in ridges along the cracks.

Those of us who had sleeping bags managed to secure a little sleep, but those without them were compelled to walk to and fro in the cold wind and rain to keep warm.

The next day we crossed the divide at 5,000 feet altitude in a blinding snow storm. At this altitude and under these conditions, one's heart action is about as irregular as the stroke of a single-cylinder gas engine. In a similar blizzard, about a month later, a man by the name of Skelly, from San José, California, was frozen to death. I broke through a crust of snow that covered a crevasse, and with one leg swinging around in space beneath, declared I never again would attempt to cross that glacier. A strong wind pushed us along with almost irresistible force down the descent of the Coast Range, and at

night we camped in timber near the foot of the glacier.

The profane prospector became very weary, and a man invited him to ride his saddle horse down the descent. The cinch became loosened, and when the saddle was on the horse's neck the old man remarked that he believed he would alight. Just as he said this, he and saddle slipped over the horse's head. After rolling and sliding some distance, the prospector managed to stand up and demonstrate that he was physically able to swear. He spread profanity all over that part of the glacier. It really dripped from his mouth when he stopped to get his breath.

This Coast Range stands on end. Geologists do not agree that it is the same mountain chain, because it has not the formation that the Coast Range possesses farther down the coast. In respect to the meaning of the term Coast Range and their location of it, they are diverted in their opinions. A prospector who visits these mountains should bring a photograph of the sun with him, as well as a diving suit; but the most useful article would be a flying machine.

We traveled along the banks of a glacier stream where the water was colored milky, caused by the rock erosion, and was almost too dense and cold to swim in. Glacier water is just about as clear as mud. Alaskans claim that he who drinks of it takes

upon himself ever after the reputation of being unable to tell the truth. At Valdez a few of such initiated ones organized themselves into a mining company which they properly named "The Goldbrick Consolidated." When selecting a witness to verify my statements, I ascertain first if he has imbibed sufficiently of the glacier beverage.

We rested a day at a camp called Twelve Mile. A man was drowned there in two feet of water. The thick and swift glacier water rolled him over and over until he was drowned, and in sight of his companions. At this camp there were two head boards inscribed with the names of E. Vananthrope and J. Tournier, who died in the snow-slide of April 30, 1898.

We traveled along swamp hillsides, and then along a deep slough where we drowned a horse. We camped on Aug. 12 in what was once a beaver pond, but as the water had drained away it was now a pasture of red-top grass as high as our horses' backs. A clear brook ran out of this, and there we caught many grayling trout. This was truly a romantic spot, such as would be conducive to poetical writing, if one were lyrically inclined. I am not so endowed by nature, yet I appreciate short-worded and musical poems. Such lines, for instance, as those of Robert Burns's describing the natural encounter in the field,

"Gin a body meet a body  
Comin' through the rye,"

appeal to me, and I believe those simple lines will be quoted and sung long after Sterling's poetical flight of

"The blue-eyed vampire, sated at her feast,  
Smiles bloodily against the leprous moon,"

has died from the lingering effects of a distorted imagination.

We remained there and scouted for the best trail route. While I was crawling through brush and "devil club" that clung to me like debts, I heard the noise of a large animal breaking away. I soon arrived at an animal bed that was still warm; the long claw marks indicated that the recent occupant had been a grizzly. As my hands felt the warmth in the abandoned bed I felt lonely and homesick, so I returned very deliberately to camp, occasionally looking back for the bear.

This camp was surrounded by a heavy forest of spruce that was on fire. At night the flames would leap to the treetops with a roar, then calm down, and presently another tree's foliage would repeat the roaring, cracking and popping. This red glaring night scene was wild and enchantingly beautiful.

We soon arrived at Klutena Lake, and traveled along its shore for four days through timber and along gravelly beaches. This lake extends from spruce-covered hills on the east, to low spruce lands on the west, while back of the latter were high snow-



capped mountains. Even the lake water was a milky color, but clear streams entered into it and up these ventured large red salmon. When frightened, they would dart back into the lake, only to reappear directly. I stood on the bank while they ventured so near that I shot five from one position and soon had enough for supper for the whole crowd.

James Garrett, a private from San Francisco, was one of those benevolent individuals who are always endeavoring to smooth the pathway of others. If a man were kicked by a horse or had lost a gun, Garrett would advise him to forget it by reflecting upon the valuable experience he was receiving in Alaska.

Another day of fatiguing march brought us to St. Anne creek. The summer nights were now dark, and we groped along until midnight before we unpacked in camp. At one place Garrett was ahead, feeling for a dim trail, when I, who was following as lead horseman, saw star reflections in front and realized that I was hesitating on the brink of a stream. Garrett called to me good-naturedly from the other side to jump as far as I could, explaining that it was rather deep on that side and I might get my feet wet. Obeying his instructions I made a respectable leap into water up to my waist, while Jim laughingly explained that it was necessary, as we could not afford to hesitate. Comprehending the situation, I proceeded to look for the trail while Jim "jumped" them in. I could hear him giving instructions about



the danger of getting their feet wet, if they failed to make a good jump. This was followed by a splash, but not so loud as the imprecations hurled at their instructor. Jim said later, when drinking coffee in camp, and it was safe for him to speak, that it was the most ungrateful crowd of poor jumpers he had ever assisted. They had even cussed him for assisting them across the creek.

I visited a camp of some men who had been there since the winter rush. I asked one of them if ever he had known Captain West. I did this because West had told me in San Francisco that it was here he intended to leave the shore of the lake and cut across to the headwaters of the Chistochina River. The man replied:

"Know that old humbug! Well, I reckon I do! If it had not been for that old scoundrel we should not be camped here. We stopped here to dog his trail, as we had heard that he was after something he once had found. We kept a delegation in sight of his every move for a month. The old liar never saw this country, and we certainly should have shot him before he got out of it."

"Why, my dear fellow, he never asked you to follow him; besides he might think the same of you for dogging his trail. You say he never was in the country prior to this time, but I have heard that he piloted a crowd that got lost and wanted to go wrong, safely over the glacier when it——"

"Yes, but that was just an accident. If I had had my way, he never would have got out of this country alive."

That shows how unreasonable some men can be, and indeed I found numbers of them who could not say enough against West. They pronounced him a humbug and a fraud who was working for the transportation companies.

The next day we traveled along the lake shore, where gulls swooped and snipes flitted near the water, which was disturbed by the lashings of salmon. We arrived at a tent-town where there were 146 tents and 84 row-boats. The outlet was a deep, slow-running stream for about five miles, but from that point the rapids began. The occupants of that town were drying salmon, not prospecting. We found there Robert Hoffman, of Brooklyn, New York, with his jaw broken in five places by an enraged grizzly. Subsequently he died from the injuries thus received.

About thirty miles below the rapids was another tent-town known as Copper Center. It was situated at the junction of Copper River and the Klutena, and is to-day a trading post. Hundreds of outfits had been lost in attempting to boat through the rapids. A man who had been pulled from the water and laid on a drift pile to recuperate, said afterwards, when relating his experience, that he had only recovered to realize that he was freezing.

"And, gentlemen, I also found that the Copper-River fever had just left me."

A bareheaded man, with water dripping from his clothes and even his hair, was met about a mile ahead of the pack train. Upon being addressed, he answered:

"I vas pully; how vas you mit yourself?"

"You look as if you had swum at least a good portion of the Pacific Ocean!"

"I vos done worse don dot!"

"Where is your hat?"

"No pody knows where ish my hat. It vas mit my sugar, coffee und flour. Say, you sit town und I tell you apout it. You see I made a pig poat vat vas square, und de poys all say, 'Henree, vot for you make him vide out?' Vell, I make him vide out so he no upset. Ven I vas ready to go, de poys all coom roundt und look. I cut him loose und ve vent roundt und roundt, und I could do nottings. Dot poat vas de whole cheese. Py und py, I said hellup, hellup, und de poat found a rock vat nopoddy knows, und I vent right on town de riffer.

"Vell, I struck vere I vaded oudt, und de poys vas glad to see me, und I vas glad to see de poys, you pet! But I neffer see dot poat. I took oudt all my money vat vas two dwenty-tollar bieces, und I say dot vas all dot Henree haf on both sides uf de Mississippi riffer, mit no hat. Von man said:

“ ‘Henree, dare vas a goot poat mit two ends, und it is tied up mit tree hundret tollars, mit grub. You gif me dot forty tollars und I go home, und you go on down de riffer mit a poat dot haf two ends.’ Vell, I gif him de money und I valks down und up on dot hill, und looks down on Hellkate.”

“You mean Hell Gate?”

“Dot vas it, Hellkate. Say, you vant to look oudt for dot Hellkate.”

“We travel the trail along the bank, so we shall not be in danger.”

“Dot’s all right, you look oudt for him, for he’s a son of a gun! I look down and see two men come aroundt in a poat, und dey hit a rock, und bust vide opens. Dey swims und swims, un py und py dey got oudt. I say, ‘Henree, you see dot rock, und you no hit em.’ I come down here und git in my poat mid two ends, und I goes aroundt de pend, und I strike the rock, too, und bust vide open, shust like de otter fellers. Vell, I go town to de pottom und finds notting und I stay dare. Py und py a feller pulls me oudt py de hair und puts me on a drift-poil, und he go town along de riffer und looks for some-dings, und dot drift-poil prakes down und I drown annodder toim. Say, dot vas a goot feller. He pulled me oudt agin!

“Vell, I go now, und you look oudt for dot Hellkate—and say, you see dot feller dot pulled me oudt,

you tell him for dot last time he pulled me oudt I say he vos a pully goot feller."

We ascended about two hundred feet and traveled along the edge of a table-land. We were away from the humid coast climate, and our pack-train kicked up a cloud of dust. The dense undergrowth of alder brush had disappeared and we could look and ride out beneath the spruce trees. Wild rose bushes clustered here and there, and trellised over the little side gullies where they held out red-flowered greetings to us. As the weather was warm, we remained over a day at Copper Center, camped neath the shady trees and caught brook trout from a clear stream.

One discovers peculiar traits in others, but never admits having any himself when traveling with companions on the trail. There was one in this crowd whose repartee was so slow that he generally thought of what he should have said the next day after the opportunity for giving it had passed. His answers generally were twenty-four hours late. He never laughed at a camp story until everyone else was through, and then he would begin to giggle, and gradually it would develop into a hearty laugh that finally culminated in such an uproarious explosion of mirthfulness that the rest of us always did our laughing over the second time. Whenever he was present that ridiculous performance could not be re-



sisted; we were compelled to shoot both barrels of our laughter at every joke that was jumped from cover.

At most any hour of the night at this camp one could hear somebody cussing or discussing the subject of mosquitoes.



## CHAPTER IV

*One should wear a 19-inch collar, a number 14 boot and a number 5 hat to be adapted to pull a sled. He should be strong in back, weak in mind, with high shoulders and a low forehead.*

AMONG those who had arrived at Copper Center by pulling sleds and back-packing, many had neglected a previous examination for the necessary qualifications. When they now proved that prospecting was not their natural calling, and that Alaska's springtime did not bud gold leaves, their minds became semi-deranged. We had met a man near the lake who evidently was insane. On being asked whence he came, he emphatically replied:

"From California."

As I, being from California, was ridiculed about the answer, I explained that the transition from that State to Alaska was sufficient to affect the strongest minds. I felt, however, that my brains were not sufficiently scrambled to be addicted to mental storms.

At the rapids we met another man who was mentally affected, and when asked from what State he hailed, he, too, replied:

"From California."

*Horses swimming Copper River.*





The joke was becoming serious by this time, and a lunatic from some other State was in demand to divert insinuations and relieve suspicion.

At Copper Center there appeared at our camp a man who talked in a very rambling manner. He was as crazy evidently as a rabbit in the third month of the year. The members of our expedition had gone to a near-by tent-town, with the exception of a military officer and a New York sketch artist. They had remained apparently to see if this man would be asked the usual question which had recently resulted so embarrassingly to the interrogator. As they appeared so interested, I resolved to prove to them that there were deranged people who had come from other States besides California. With desperation I asked the expected question. He straightened himself to a dignified attitude, as he replied:

"I am from Humboldt County, California!"

In reply to his counter, I lied and said I was from Missouri, and California was saved, so far as I was concerned.

At that time Copper Center was one of those ephemeral towns, where the occupants are here to-day and gone to-morrow. In the wild rush to this country, there were about two prospectors to every hundred invaders, and two others who were willing to learn, while the other ninety-six were waiting for a "strike," as they termed it. The latter busied themselves generally in holding miners' meetings

over dog-fights and other such trivial matters. Most of them had never lived outside of the reign of written law and sheriffs and town marshals and mayors; so they held meetings and proceeded to elect those officials. It was disgusting to a free-born American to see those who had been raised under a monarchical form of government approach Captain Abercrombie about their trivial disputes, as if he were a dictator, or possibly Solomon. It was so annoyingly un-American that when they came to me inquiring for the Captain, I generally pointed out James Garrett as the man. He proceeded to fill them up with so much "bughouse" advice that I was obliged to caution him, fearing that he would advise the commission of some overt act done in the name of Captain Abercrombie and the United States of America.

A high clay bank opposite Copper Center had been prospected and found to be, from a monetary standpoint, defunct, bankrupt and busted. As guns and ammunition were plentiful and useless, those who were preparing to leave the country spent whole days in doing nothing but shooting the inoffensive bank, and some day a lead mine may be found there.

The wastefulness of shooting the ammunition away was a characteristic trait of those who had always lived in civilization. A frontiersman never would have done such a thing, but would have given it to those who intended to remain with the country,



or have cached it in some dry place where at some time it might be of some use to others. This is only one instance. Another was the burning of a large outfit of provisions by some individuals who had become disgusted and were leaving. They had worked hard to pull it in there, and rather than leave it to be of some use to wandering wayfarers, they preferred to burn it. Alaska was better off when that sort of people departed.

A short distance from the din and rattle of the "shooters" and the chopping and falling of trees, could be heard the voice of an auctioneer saying, "Now, gentlemen, what am I offered for this article?" Those who had come into the country with two and three years' outfits were selling them for a pittance, and that, too, before they had been there six months.

"I am a married man, and this is no place for me!" said one of the number. "My wife thinks I'm a peach, a blossom and a hero!"

Then he straightened up, tightened his belt a hole, stroked his unkempt beard, strutted up and down the trail with his hands on his hips and flirted his ragged coat-tails until he had lowered my estimation of his wife's opinion about ninety per cent.

"She thinks I am a loo-loo bird," he continued, "and I feel through my whole system that I ought to be at home *doing* something! You can't imagine how my wife loves me, my person and my ways!



Don't talk to me of imaginary millions! I don't want riches, but am going home! Behold, to-day you see me and to-morrow I'll be gone, flown, vamoosed! Ta, ta, adios!" and that ragged, bedraggled specimen of humanity disappeared down the trail, in a "dog trot." Surely his wife must have been a love bird of the rarest sort if, behind those whiskers, tangled like last year's nests, she could have recognized any sort of a bird, "loo-loo" or otherwise.

I consented to accompany Captain Abercrombie and Sam Lynch on an exploring trip into the Alaskan Range, one hundred miles northward. As this entailed unknown dangers, I handed my watch to Mr. Archer, an obliging gentleman, to keep until my return to the coast. He went back with the soldiers part of the way, but was drowned in the Tonsina River. Afterwards my watch was found with some other trinkets in a sack which had been tied to the raft he had abandoned.

We crossed the Copper River by boat and by swimming our horses, on August 28, and camped over there. Mt. Drum looked to be no more than twelve miles away, and the sun's shining lingered as a tip of gold on its top-peak until long after it had been hidden to us. That always causes the surmise that a mountain is much higher than had been suspected.

We broke camp feeling that we were leaving a neighborhood of American Bedouins, ourselves the

most nomadic of all. We spent the day in pulling horses from bog-holes by the tails of others, fighting mosquitoes and occasionally listening to the whirr of the spruce hen as she flitted from tree to tree. A spruce hen is so remarkably tame, that the Indians say they can, with long poles, place a looped cord over their heads. I do not doubt that statement. At night we camped at the upper edge of timber, where logs lay, here and there, and where luxuriant bunch-grass waved. Mt. Drum still appeared to be about twelve miles away. The next morning Sam Lynch decided that the mountain was farther away than it was when we left Copper Center.

Here we found a flock of ptarmigan, and as my Colt Frontier was the only kind of a gun that was with us, I enjoyed the sport of killing nine of them.

It may be well to say, right here, that disreputable characters have caused an erroneous opinion among many that a revolver or pistol is used only for killing one's fellow-men. Many good citizens among the Pacific Coast mountains use nothing else to kill large game. I have used no other for twenty-five years, and during that time I have killed about all kinds of large game that inhabit the North American continent. I will prefer a pistol to a revolver, when a special kind is made that will shoot a 40-40 cartridge and with eight or ten inches between sights. The prospector cannot afford to be handicapped with a rifle when scaling the precipices, neither can

the stockman when riding the range; but all good citizens cast those weapons aside on their return to civilization.

We traveled for days along the bases of Mt. Drum and Mt. Sanford, above timber and through bunch-grass and blueberry bushes. The mosquitoes had caused us fully to realize the mistake that had been made when we were born; but they now left us, and the gnats took their places until our ears attained the thickness of ordinary boot-soles. Mt. Sanford is not a volcano, and to me it has not the appearance of ever having been one, yet the early writers of the Yukon reported that it smoked; and also a few prospectors believe that they have seen smoke being emitted from its summit. It is the prettiest mountain that the writer ever looked upon, and not only is its summit easy of access, but it commands one of the grandest views imaginable. As we descended near to the timber it was discovered that the winter winds have blown down this mountain at times with such terrific force that small spruce are to be seen with all their limbs on one side, pointing toward the valley. Occasionally one may be found growing along the ground, with the limbs forming a hedge.

We succeeded in crossing the Sanford River just before its noonday flood at that point, and ascended the bank to look back on a raging torrent of water. This stream has its source in a glacier, and like all



*Mt. Drum*

*(Seen through telescope)*





glacial streams is subject to a daily flood during the warm days of summer. It was with difficulty that the last one of our horses crossed, so rapid was the rise. We camped on the bank for a noon-day lunch and had just unpacked when a six-foot Indian greeted us with a grunt.

Afterwards we learned to recognize this bushy-headed fellow as Talsona Nickoli. At that time he could not talk a word of English, but with our mutual knowledge of Chinook we managed to hold a simple colloquy. He succeeded, by shutting his eyes and repeating, "Ha-lo," in making us understand that we were the first white men he had ever seen. He was clothed in the Indian garb of dressed skins, and wore nothing of white man's make, not even a hat. His hair was kept out of his eyes by a rawhide string tied around his head, and he represented about as wild a human being as could be found in Uncle Sam's herd. He explained, by holding up his fingers and pulling down one at a time and repeating "tobay," that he had killed five mountain sheep. He was very much afraid of our horses, and intently watched us pack them. As we departed, he, too, struck out for the mountains, whence he had come.

Another day's travel, and camp was made near a small lake where the Captain caught, with a fly hook, a large mess of grayling trout. Mention is made of this, because it has been said that Alaska trout



will not take a fly. Near there we found a notice, which read:

“NOTICE: I take one mining claim and if it's good I take two.

“OLE OLESON, Minnesota.”

About 10 P. M. on the night of Aug. 27, I was strolling out alone, and while looking at the stars was meditating why Destiny had led us up there to the far northern world. Polaris, with its constellations, was nearly overhead and apparently in another heaven from that when seen from more southern latitudes. At that time, our moon was bestowing her refulgent reflections on old Spanish towers or probably enhancing the beauties of Vienna, but the eternal watch-towers of the high, rockribbed mountains, near by, were most impressive, and I thought of the words of Pope:

“He who through vast immensity can pierce,  
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,  
Observe how system into system runs,  
What other planets circle, other suns,  
What varied beings people every star,  
May tell us why Heaven made us as we are.”

Just then, of all times the most appropriate, we were treated to a most beautiful display of the Aurora Borealis. Those northern lights were not so far away as one might suppose, but right near

camp, apparently only a few thousand feet from us. They hung in the heavens like hundreds of pale strings, quivering and dancing, all together, with harmonious movement. They changed color as often as they changed position. Now they were a deep red, now orange with a bluish tinge, waving and trembling, dancing and quivering in fantastic weirdness here, there and yonder; spreading out like a thin gauze and disappearing to reappear nearer in front, in solid phalanx, to continue again their beautiful oscillations.

Prospectors generally claim that those terrestrial and aerial magnetic affinities are visibly manifested more often in localities where great copper zones exist. While that is a very plausible conclusion, it is also probable that the altitude, and the sudden atmospherical changes occurring at this time of year, assisted in producing this spectacular event.

No artificial fireworks could compare with this nocturnal display. It seemed to say:

"The great summer scene has been enacted now on the northern stage, and those who desire not to remain and witness the tragedies of winter's play, with its moonlit canyons, mountains of deceptive fire, and curtains of scintillating ice, had better hie them to the southland."

A streak of light shot across the horizon and vanished; then came solitude: the vast mysterious solitude of that unexplored region.

"No hammers fell, no ponderous axes swung:

Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung, Majestic silence."

With the feeling that we were so infinitesimal we were merely foreign germs or microbes, we wended our way amidst the colossal surroundings where silences are spawned. Our course from Mt. Sanford wound among what appeared to be old craters, the floors of which were about one hundred feet wide, composed of large broken rocks that evidently had been burned black when the once tropical climate had been changed by the heat escaping through these apertures. The sides, or rims, were about fifty feet deep, and many of those old hoppers were filled with water, forming small round lakes. We traveled slowly over broken rocks, and when down in the valley walked over moss-covered hummocks among which trees were rooted.

These numerous craters and the square miles of broken-up rock indicate to me that once this may have been the top of a mountain, which, after burning out, had sunk. The sinking would certainly break up the surface in this manner.

We crossed the Copper above the Slahna junction, where it was divided into several quicksandy streams. We camped in the midst of good horse feed, among patches of willow and scattering cottonwood trees. Cow tracks were so numerous that to have heard the bark of a dog, or the rattle of a bell and to have met a boy driving cattle would not

have greatly surprised us. In fact, we expected to run up against a pair of bars or a fence, but we soon discovered so many bear tracks that we recovered from the delusive fancy, and realized that the cow tracks were made by moose and caribou, and that we were far from the haunts of the white man.

While the others were preparing supper, I rode a mile to the Slahna, crossed over where it was not quite swimmingly deep, and there found the old abandoned Indian village, the high grass and the cottonwood trees, just as Captain West had described them, at the very spot he had intended was to be our meeting place. Away down in San Francisco, seated beside a table, he had pointed out this exact locality to me, and had even described the clear stream of water that emptied into the Slahna at this place and also a high gravel bank near by.

The next day, which was the last day of August, we crossed the Slahna, where I had forded it the evening before, and here met some prospectors who had been up the Slahna River, and now were returning to the coast. They corroborated the West story in regard to the Suslota creek emptying into the Slahna instead of into the Copper River, as indicated on the maps. Just a month after this meeting, one of those men was drowned in the Copper River rapids. The Slahna is a deep, sluggish stream from Mentasta Lake down to within three miles of



the Copper River, but at points is swift water and it was there I fought for my life on our return.

We were three days ascending the Slahna valley, along dry, birch-covered ridges, between hopper-like potholes, from one to two hundred feet deep, with quakin'asp, birch and spruce trees growing on their rims. Quakin'asp is a contraction in general use which is derived from the words quaking aspen, a species of the poplar. We continued to the source of this river, away up in the Alaskan Range. How it did rain there! We made our beds in a low place, and before morning it was filled with water and we with rheumatism.

We returned across country for Lake Mentasta, and spent a day in penetrating a swamp and another in getting out of it. We frightened a moose so that it averaged 18 feet to a jump, for a few jumps, and then trotted out of the country. A small stream of the coldest water that I ever felt was the outlet of a beaver lake, which must have been on ice. We led our horses into that innocent-looking place and spent an hour in getting them out. It had a false bottom of some floating substance, and Sam Lynch stepped into it up to his neck. Immediately he introduced a new college yell into Alaska. After he was out on the bank, he continued to yell some ornamental additions. One horse turned the pack beneath him, and when the ropes were cut, he floundered out at the expense of our already limited sup-



*Fording a Dangerous Glacier Stream.*





plies. Every struggle he made resulted in a globule of flour floating off on the surface. We repacked our poor shivering horses, minus the sugar, coffee and dried potatoes.

We camped beside a sluggish stream. Near by was a round knoll, about one thousand feet high, and this I ascended to get a view of the surrounding country before dark. I swam a horse across the stream. I tied my ferry boat—the horse—to a tree, as it was too swampy for him to go to the foot of the hill. The sunset was so beautiful that I lingered on the summit, and when I descended an old well-beaten bear trail, the September night was as dark as black ink in a black bottle at midnight. We swam the river when it was too dark to see the opposite shore. The horse went shiveringly to his supper, and I, in like manner, stood by the fire and ate mine. The hooting of an owl has been heard in many places, but surely a hoot was never heard that sounded quite as lonely as did one from a near-by tree, away up there in that swampy forest of Alaska, in nearly 63 degrees north latitude.

The next day, while traveling through the forests, I discovered a growth of fungus, but could not decide if it were a mushroom or a toadstool, and the proverbial test of eating it and if I died it was a toadstool did not appeal to me. It is as difficult for me to determine the difference between a toadstool and a mushroom as it would be to decide if a mat-

rimonial venture would be happiness; and I would rather be a live bachelor than a dead hero.

We traveled along the edge of Mentasta Lake, which is but three miles long, and crossed the outlet near some Indian wickiups. We picked wild berries and saw Indian graves where, from crudely made crosses, little flags, as love tokens, flirted with the breeze.

## CHAPTER V

*Prospectors occasionally eat beans, but their habitual diet is hope.*

MENTASTA PASS is a low, timbered passageway through the Alaskan Range. The divide is so flat that it surprises one to find the water running in an opposite direction to that pursued a short distance behind. We traveled several miles in this pass and camped near a pond of water, where we killed widgeon ducks, and where deep sloughs coursed through the timber.

A man from California overtook us there. He was on his way to the Yukon and among his pack-horses was one that I had brought up to Alaska. He camped with us, and something interesting, which relates to his trip, will be related further on.

We were a day here, felling trees side by side for bridges, and placing boughs, then moss and dirt, on them. Although these bridges were high above the water, our mustangs willingly crossed on them. At one place a large lake was formed by a beaver dam across a small creek. A pile of three-years-old brush had been placed near by, and more two-years-old brush was on top of this, then more that was evidently one year old, and on top of all was brush

that had been freshly cut and was yet green. As this brush represented annual cuttings, and was close to the dam, it was for no other purpose apparently but to stop a leakage if one should occur.

We saw stumps of large trees which the beavers had cut down, but the whole of the trees had disappeared to the bottom of the lake. If I could talk the beaver language I would submit a standing offer to help them a month with an ax, if they would allow me to see them move one of those large trees after they had cut it down. They evidently fall the trees true and as near where they want them as would the most experienced woodsman.

We left the ponds, sloughs and thickly-grown forest for birch-covered ridges, and at night camped on the Tanana slope, where were babbling brooks, tall grass and a few scattering spruce trees. We rested on September 12 to await the melting of about four inches of snow that had fallen the previous night. We did more—we killed, butchered, cooked and ate a large, fat porcupine. Several times, since that incident, this individual's appetite has been in a craving mood, but not for porcupine.

From Porcupine Camp we traveled along the eastern slope of the range, in a southeasterly direction, towards the point where a little puff of smoke, several miles away, indicated an Indian hunting camp.



We arrived at this camp about noon. A little boy and girl came out from their hidden camp and astonished us by talking good English. They explained that they had attended a Mission school on the Yukon, and half a moon after the boy had left with his uncle, to accompany him on this fall hunt, the twelve-years-old girl had run away and followed them. She had traveled through the forests, along mountain trails and across dangerous rivers, to this lonely spot, living on berries and roots while making the trip. She had made little rafts of dead sticks, bound together with willow withes, and on one of those she had crossed the great Tanana River. With her inborn instinct to follow the proper course, she had watched for the only smoke on the Tokio River, for she had good reasons to believe that it rose from the campfire of her relatives. This child of the wild had accomplished that which not one full-grown white person in a hundred could have done.

Those children asked if we had moose meat, and upon receiving a negative answer, they retired to the brush thicket; and presently a wrinkled, blear-eyed, dirty old squaw ventured forth and held out to us a flank of moose-meat in her filthy hands. The meat was loud of smell, and the old squaw was loud in its praise, repeating "Wal-lay," meaning good. While one does not always rely on the truth of an Indian, we took her word for that statement. We

advised her to keep it for Winter, saying that we killed more birds than we could eat, and caught loads of salmon; besides, our horses were too weak to pack the meat, and—well, we were not hungry. We thanked her, apologized and lied.

Traveling over soft, deep moss for a few miles we camped on the bank of the clear stream of little Tokio. Indian Albert, who was hunting for the camp just passed, tracked us up and ate of our scanty supper. He had a long clip-blade hunting knife which he desired to trade for my revolvers. He volunteered to show me where the Tyena trail crossed to Tetling, on the Tanana. As I expected to explore those wilds at some future time I accompanied him for a mile through timber and over moss-covered ground, where a white man could not have tracked an elephant, and finally we arrived at the place where the trail was pointed out.

When we were returning, circumstances placed him behind. After a few steps had been taken, instinctively I looked around quickly and discovered Mr. Indian in a crouching attitude, with his knife clutched to his breast, as if ready for a spring. The muzzle of my Frontier swiftly but silently invited him to travel in front, and he complied most willingly.

It was not desirable that I should take the life of even an Indian, although the circumstances justified it. He had not been able to resist the tempta-

tion to knock me out for the revolvers, and he should not have been given the chance, as I had recognized in him the pugnacious, Digger-like Indian, a cowardly petty thief. He did not know but that all of us were armed, although he must have realized that the others would be told of the occurrence, therefore after being so fairly caught he would be too cowardly to let his bushy head appear from behind a log or tree, as he would expect to get it cracked. I desired no trouble with Indians, and to have killed him might have caused his revenge on some innocent white man. As my companions were unarmed, and it would cause them only uneasiness, I did not tell them of the incident.

I was told, two years after this event, that Albert was considered a very bad Indian by all the Tananas and Ahtnas. Suslota John said that the Tananas had once banished him to Forty Mile for six moons, and the Ahtnas had banished him to the coast for five moons, and he thought they would shoot him. He said Albert would steal from Indians as well as from white men, and that he might cause trouble. He added that Albert once had shot a white prospector by the name of Robinson, on the Tanana.

We ascended a high peak for the purpose of searching for a pass through the mountains, and there we were charmed by an enchanting scene. The hazy blue of the east dimly screened the rolling hills

of the Forty-Mile country and those of the Ketchemstock. The high, majestic sentinels of the Copper River Valley,—Mount Sanford, Mount Wrangell and Mount Drum,—were to the southwest. From those watchtowers, a wintry vigil is kept forever on the valley below, with occasional threats of hell-tongued flames from the crater of Uniletta which exerts an influence for good over the superstitious children of the forest.

The Copper River valley was beautiful, with its silvery river-threads glistening in the sunlight where they wound through forests with shady dales and innumerable lakes. Away up on this mountain peak laughingly bloomed a little flower.

“And this same flower that blooms to-day,  
To-morrow will be dying.”

The desired pass was discovered, and while descending we came out on a point where a yearling bear was seen, rolling, waltzing and tumbling on a grassy flat below. He was just about our desired size, and if secured, we should be relieved of all fear of starving before we arrived at Copper Center.

By working along the side of a rocky bluff, an attempt was made to creep up on him, but before half-way to the little fellow, I discovered that I had managed to approach to the largest black silver-tip grizzly imaginable. There he was, not more than



eighty yards away, and acting as if he had discovered, by the expression of my countenance, that somebody had made a mistake. He appeared to possess an uncontrollable desire to test the texture of my clothing, or search me for valuables. When first he was seen, his head was about the size of a water-pail, but we had not gazed at each other a minute until it had increased to the size of a wash-tub. I concluded that if we *must* fight it out it was advisable to start the battle before he attained the size of an elephant or a two-story building.

I laid the gold pan on a rock, held on to one side of the bluff and attempted to draw my six-shooter. Accidentally I knocked the pan from its place, and it went bumping and rattling down that rock-pile, filling Bruin with vision of destruction. He darted away like a rocket, while a few bullets were shot into the ground behind him. He ran a quarter of a mile, stopped, looked back, then fearing that the pan might rattle some more, he dug his claws deeper into the ground, threw up more dirt behind, snorted louder and ran faster down hill, across a ridge, over a gulch and another ridge, until his dark form faded away in the distance. Then I felt brave. The little cub had become frightened also, and had left.

The next day we crossed through the pass, where there was a lake that reflected beautiful mountain scenes from its surface, and where water lilies were



growing. We traveled an old trail on which we found Indian beads. This trail led us down to the Slahna, which we crossed on a raft and swam our horses, camping on the west side about six miles below Mentasta Lake.

Those September mornings were frosty; the ground was frozen and the grass was rapidly losing strength. We lightened our loads to enable us to reach the old Indian village near the mouth of the Slahna in one day's travel. Captain Abercrombie took our outfit on the raft down the river, and Lynch and I hurried down through the timber with the horses. When about a mile from the camping place, the raft came into view, with its pilot chilled and cramped from being so near the cold water. Here we loaded the packs on the horses again and the others proceeded down to the old abandoned Indian town, while I took the raft and struck out for a tent that was on the opposite side, and a quarter of a mile below.

On this tent was marked in large letters: "We are the boys from Decatur, Illinois." They "pot-latched" me two cups of flour and one of beans, and extended an urgent invitation to remain overnight, as it was dark and there was rapid water between that point and the Copper River, about three miles below. As we were out of anything to eat in our camp, I declined the offer. Hoping to land in an eddy at the mouth of Ahtel creek, near our camp, I

tied the provisions in a small sack to my vest, bade Bert Hurd good-bye, and shoved the raft out into that boiling current.

It was a roaring diversion, where the water was too deep for a pole to reach bottom, and the raft was pilot, captain and crew, with one useless passenger. The frolicking current did not hesitate to slam the craft against the over-hanging brush along the bank. Down on my knees with my hat knocked off, I braced myself against those sweepers of alder and willow until the raft sank so low in the water that the waves slapped my face; then the thing would slowly turn until the current caught it. Immediately it would rise and shoot away, to repeat the performance on the opposite side, a quarter of a mile below. We, the raft and I, failed to reach the coveted eddy by about four feet, and away we went, bouncing with renewed animation for the Copper. The provisons were successfully thrown on to a high bank, in an open place. Then there was more trouble with the sweepers. Fortunately, the raft struck the bank in a favorable place and I left it to continue its crazy voyage. Slowly I worked through the brush for a mile, to where was found the provisions. Then I started for camp in as straight a direction as I could guess. On the way, a frightened bear snorted and went crashing through the brush, but I felt that frightening bears was a pleasant pas-time to rafting dangerous rivers at night-time. For-

tunately I came out of the brush right at our camp-fire.

We descended the west side of the Copper River by crossing swamps, swimming rivers and cutting our way through forests of spruce. We passed a camp where there was a lone man watching a cache of provisions, while his partners were off at the head of the river. He complained of not having seen a man for more than a month. He lighted his pipe and, seating himself on a log, became communicative.

"Whenever I think about my coming up here," said he, "I realize that I put up a job on myself and made it work, too. This would be a good place to play solitaire, but I'll wager that no man, after he has been here a month, can play even *that* without cheating himself."

We remained there long enough to cook what we called a square meal from that man's supplies, and refused his offer of some provisions, as we were not hungry when we left, and thought we could kill enough birds for our need. Near this camp I killed my first Alaska pheasant. They are very much like the prairie chicken in size, color and in their manner of flying. Their flesh differs from that of the spruce hen, in that the meat is whiter. They subsist mostly on seeds and berries and not on spruce needles, as do the spruce hens.

The grass had lost its strength and our poor

horses soon lost theirs. The most disagreeable task that I had to perform was to shoot one of our equine servants. We stood him on top of a five-hundred-foot embankment, and his body went rolling down into the Copper River. We felt fortunate when each of us had a little pine squirrel for supper. We ate those with a relish, even if my companions did insist upon referring to them as rats. Often, while sitting around our campfire, we would tantalize our appetites by talking about the good things to eat and of the double orders we intended to hand in at popular restaurants when we returned to civilization. I attempted to encourage my companions to eat reindeer moss, boiled and seasoned, by telling them that it was a favorite dish used and eaten by the royalty of Lapland, but they insisted that they were good Americans, and not particularly stuck on the diet of kings, whether Nebuchadnezzar or his Arctic imitators.

The McClelland party was boating upon one side of the Copper River when another party was doing the same along the opposite shore. The latter attempted to cross over, but their boat was capsized and all were drowned. Their names were unknown to the McClelland party, and thus all trace of them was lost. Probably the Valdez postmaster, when later he returned their long uncalled for letters, received anxious ones of inquiry from their friends at home.

We arrived at Copper Center on September 26 and found the population decreasing by boat-loads of the people going down the river. Many had built cabins, and now had changed their minds and were going out with the "push," as they called the home-going crowd.

Our trip had impressed Captain Abercrombie with the fact that a trail into this country was an absolute necessity. Although he was enthusiastic before, he was more so now, and it was partly through his renewed exertion in behalf of the region that his name will ever be identified with the opening up of the Copper River country. A few ridiculed the idea of a trail being constructed through those mountains, claiming that the project was impossible without crossing a glacier.







*The Banks of the Copper River.*

## CHAPTER VI

*An Indian once said: "You go down river, he help you; you no go same way river go, he no help. He all same white man."*

WE left our outfits at Copper Center, on September 28, and joined Millard, Dal Stevens, Nutter Bros., Pete Cashman, Jim Finch, Al Hinky and others in the novelty of boating down the river. Seated in three row-boats and all pulling oars, the current assisted in shooting us down rapids and around bends at a ten-mile gait.

The sun shone brightly, and the mornings were crisp, with the thermometer at 18 above. The ride was fascinating and the Indians waved their old rags at us as if wishing us "God speed," no doubt remarking to each other: "Surely the white men are as plentiful in their country as the blades of grass!"

The Indians had been benefited by the generous "pot-latches" of the whites. They possessed all sorts of guns which would shoot new and unknown grades of ammunition, that they could not obtain. They wore all sorts of misfit clothing and their wickiups contained more or less of tea, coffee, sugar and tobacco, which would-be prospectors had tugged,

pulled and packed over the glacier, only to abandon with their first disappointment.

Our first night's camp was at Taral, where the Indians exhibited cooking utensils which had been hammered out of copper. This was the home of Chief Nicoli, who led in the murder of the Russian explorers. It was he who, many years before, had led the Copper River Indians in a successful resistance to the invading Tananas. They claim that the Russians were very cruel to them.

Two years after we camped there, Nicoli departed to the Happy Hunting-grounds for an interview with the Great Spirit about that and other matters—possibly the death of John Bremner, who, it is claimed by them, was killed by the Tananas. The natives now say that the spirit of Nicoli protects the mountain sheep from the leaden missiles of the white man.

This Taral chief was a man of strong character. During his active life he prohibited any direct business intercourse between the natives of the interior and those on the coast. He held the key to the interior by way of the Copper River, and as he lived on the bank of the river, no Indian dared pass. The Indians of the interior brought furs down to this dictator, and he took them to the coast traders and returned with guns and powder. They generally hammered their own bullets from native copper.

Old Bachaneta once attempted to descend the

river on a raft, but Taral Nicoli demanded that he should turn back. Bachaneta was a noted leader among the Indians at the head-waters of the river and of the upper Tanana, but a bullet from the rifle of Nicoli caused him to seek a landing and return on foot to his home, one hundred miles away. Billy Bachaneta related this incident to me, and added that if Nicoli had not died, he and his father and a few friends had intended to repeat the attempt.

The next day we passed through Wood canyon, with its crooked walls and beautiful scenery, where the water was deep and boiling, with large whirlpools in the turns. We passed the tent-town of Bremner, at the mouth of Bremner River, where many in tents had tried to pass the winter. The scurvy had nearly wiped out that camp. A few men had loaded their sick comrades on hand-sleds, and had descended the Copper River in the dead of winter, while the ravens flying overhead had announced: "We'll pick your bones!" There is no sadder tale of northern hardships than that of Bremner.

We overtook the soldiers who had abandoned their horses and boated to Bremner. They had been instructed to ascend Tasnuna River from this place and descend Lowe River to Valdez Bay. Lowe River was formerly known as Valdez River, but Lieutenant Lowe fell into it once and thereafter changed its name from its mouth to its source. Ac-



cording to this precedent, most of the rivers in that part of Alaska should be named Powell. But there would be other claimants.

On the last of September we arrived at the head of the rapids, which were about three miles long. The river here plunges down through a narrow space between a perpendicular wall on one side and the moraine of Miles glacier on the other. Above this glacier, and on the west side of the river, can be seen the remarkable sight of trees growing on the ice. The formation appears to be rolling, gravelly hills, but the deep-cut ravines disclose them to be old glacier moraines, with a few feet of vegetable matter and débris on clear blue ice.

Mr. Corliss was there at the rapids with his boat, "Long Tom," and was going to attempt boating through on the morrow. A man had been drowned there the day before while attempting that same feat. I seated myself on a large boulder, about forty feet above the swirling water, to watch the "Long Tom" go through. Six men, each with an oar, pulled straight for the rapids, while Corliss, with set jaws and a determined look on his face, stood up in the stern as the pilot. The boat appeared to hesitate before taking the plunge, then shot down like an arrow for about one hundred and fifty yards, where it whirled in an eddy, then plunged down into the second rapids.

The occupants could be seen, now high on the

center crest where their oars could not touch water but were working in air, then deeply dipping in the troughs of the current; but finally they landed below the second rapids. A few of us carried our sleeping-bags around along the trail that traversed the bluff. Others followed Corliss in one of our boats, and they also succeeded in landing it below without mishap, but the danger was so appalling that they concluded to line the second boat, by all hands holding to a long rope and walking along the moraine side of the river.

This attempt was a failure and the boat broke away with sixty feet of rope dragging behind. This held the boat straight and safely piloted it through the first two rapids; but a loop in the rope caught on the bottom at the head of the third rapid, known as the cataract, and there it bobbed up and down, all night, with our provisions, and blankets for six men.

It bobbed and bobbed there, regardless of our appetites and comfort, while we built a fire in some driftwood and despondently discussed the situation. There appeared but one thing to do and that was to cut the rope with a bullet. We discovered, by throwing rocks, that the boat was much farther away than at first we had supposed, the distance being about sixty yards. As the boat was moving, and as it was necessary to strike the rope when taut, it was a difficult shot to make. There were but nine cartridges left for my revolver, and these were

reserved until all ammunition in camp had been used up by another shooter. Fortunately my eighth shot severed a strand, and my ninth completely cut the rope, and immediately that boat shot away from there, like a quarter horse on a race track. It rolled out the blankets, when going through the cataract, and then floated on down to deep water.

The watchers who were down there with the other boat which had made the run successfully, paddled out among the icebergs and recovered it. We built a fire among some driftwood, ate flapjacks and sand, while the wind blew a gale. Acres of ice fell from the two-hundred-foot face of Miles glacier, across the river, a mile away; these would disappear beneath the surface of that deep water, and then bob up, to float off as icebergs. When they struck the water they sent waves away out on our beach.

We arrived at Alganik on October 3. This was a trading post at the edge of high tide, with a few goods, a barrel of whiskey, a squaw-man or two, and several half-breed children. We followed the guidance of an Indian from that point, and striking the tide just right, we crossed the twenty-five miles of mud flats, and ascended the outlet of Eyak Lake, on an ingoing current. On the banks of this outlet were hundreds of acres of redtop grass, and occasionally large spruce trees. The tide carried us on, and increased our speed. We passed a sloop in which were a squaw-man, his wife and fam-

ily. The half-breed children hung over the edge of their floating home and trailed their little fingers in the water as they drifted along this winding slough. These squaw-men generally live in sloops, and drift from one Indian town to another, shooting duck, catching fish and degenerating. Yet there are a few of these men who have homes and are making good livings for their families and educating their children.

We crossed the three miles of Eyak Lake, landed at the Indian town of Eyak, and then portaged six hundred yards across a peninsula to the Alaska Commercial Company's fish cannery. This now is the terminal of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad. Thence we rowed three miles to Orca, where seventy-five Copper River adventurers were waiting for a steamer to take them home. Among them was a Mr. Leonard, an old Rocky mountaineer, who was one of the only two men that had ever boated through all of the Copper River rapids, including the cataract, generally avoided by descending a slough. Those men had no knowledge of the slough, and disclaimed any credit for performing the remarkable feat. When Leonard was asked how he had succeeded, he replied:

"With a pair of oars, a flat-bottomed boat, ignorance and the necessary attributes that should accompany a pair of idiots, sir!"

The next day we boarded a steamer for Valdez,



having traveled about six hundred miles in fifty-eight days, having cut our way through brush and timber the greater portion of the distance. The crossing of the glacier streams were the most bitter reminiscences of the trip.

The man from California, who had camped with us in Mentasta Pass, proceeded to the Yukon and there had met another fellow who was so eager to get out of the country that he had offered the Californian a large sum of money if he would take him to Orca, and accepting it, he had returned almost immediately.

This Yukoner was an old man and had in his possession about three hundred pounds of gold nuggets. The reason of his anxiety to get out by that route, then almost unknown, may be explained in this wise: The Canadian government had retarded the development of its resources by levying a tax on all gold produced. At that time, the Klondikers were taxed one-fifth, and probably because of that, many had slipped through the line into Alaska and had claimed ever afterwards that they had procured their gold in Uncle Sam's territory.

There was another class who worked in the mines for wages and who stole nuggets while in the shafts, and buried their treasure until they desired to leave. Then it became imperatively necessary that they should slip across the line to avoid making a statement of how and where they had procured the gold.



Those never had dust, only nuggets, such as they could pick up with their fingers.

The man here mentioned succeeded in arriving at Orca, and from there traveled second class by steamer to Juneau. Any fellow who could be guilty of stealing out of the country with gold would be likely to continue covering up his tracks. To produce evidence, in case of future arrest, probably he would deceive some reputable person to assist him unwittingly by repeating his statements. I do not say that this particular individual did that, but I do know that there was an old man who visited a prominent citizen of Juneau and disclosed to him that he possessed that amount of gold nuggets, and represented that he had procured the gold in the Coast Range, not far from Orca. He even detailed how he was out of provisions and how he had killed a moose right near where he had made the discovery, although as a matter of fact there are no moose in the Coast Range. He promised to show the Juneau man where he had found the gold if he would accompany him there the next year.

From Juneau that old man had returned to the States, where he had died the following year, and no doubt there are people who are yet looking for the mysterious and fabulously rich auriferous deposit which they believe this old fellow found in the Coast Range. They will continue to do that, just as others have hunted for the John Swift mine of

Kentucky since 1761; and are looking for the "Old Squaw Mine" of the Yuma desert; and the "Peg-Leg" mines of both California and Oregon; or the Captain West "Mud Glaciers" of the Tanana, and dozens of other mirages that remain as undisturbed delusions where the rainbows point.

There was no time to rest at Valdez, for immediately I was instructed to take my transit and carry triangulations up the Lowe River and approximately to determine the altitude of the pass that had been discovered and reported by Corporal Hyden. Two companions and myself accomplished the feat of getting over into Dutch Flat in four days with two mules. It could be done in one day now, as a trail has been blasted through the Keystone Canyon.

We met Frank Schrader, of the Geological Survey, in Dutch Flat, and also the soldiers previously mentioned as having come through that way. A man by the name of Baird had perished there a few months before. One of my assistants returned with the soldiers, taking the mules with him, while with one companion I remained to complete the survey in a snow storm.

My companion, who was a practical joker, and I camped on our way out without bedding. We built a large fire, near which I sat with my back against a tree. There was a forty-pound rock lying in front of me, and my companion would sit on that until I would nearly freeze. He enjoyed being between me

and the fire. When he was sufficiently warmed in front, he would stretch himself out, face downward, and snore for half an hour. When it was necessary to warm his front, he would wake up and repeat the performance of sitting in front of me for awhile. He always did enjoy anything of that kind, so while he was snoring I figured out that I was deeply in debt to him for the many practical jokes he had played on me during the past Summer, and therefore concluded to square several of the accounts at one time.

I rolled that rock into the fire and left it there until it was too hot to spit on, then with the aid of a stick of wood, I returned it to its usual place. My companion snored for only a few minutes longer, then arose and very deliberately sat down on that rock. Immediately he displayed unusual activity by yelling a war-whoop, jumping over the log fire, and crashing down the hill on the other side with a noise that resembled a stampede of wild cattle. He returned rubbing his blister, and remarked that there must be a root on fire beneath that rock, as it got hot quicker than any rock he had ever heard of. He said he preferred to stand any way.

Pete Cashman, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Ham left on October 18, to bring in the horses that had been left near Taral. It was a useless undertaking, as the feed had been frozen and they were too weak to travel. Their account of the trip appeared in the

government report of the Copper River Exploring Expedition, and reads like a fairy-tale.

They encountered a bear, and after running until exhausted they discovered that the bear was running in the opposite direction. Then they laughed and wondered why that crazy bear had not been holed up for the winter. Often they were lost and without food, and all one night they traveled in a circle. In one day they counted nine bears and saw many wolverine tracks. Once they were caught in an ice jam on the river, but the Indians helped them to reach shore and housed them over night.

They cut some meat from a dead horse for food and returned. Having frosted their hands and faces, they were taken in and fed on the best the Indians possessed. Stewart had torn the fork of his trousers, and after due consultation, several squaws decided to mend them, but Stewart was bashful and preferred to sit cross-legged. According to the government report two squaws grabbed and held his hands while a third pulled off his trousers. Stewart yelled to Cashman for assistance, but Pete replied with laughter and encouraged the squaws in their undertaking. Stewart said afterwards that he entertained a high opinion of Indian housewifery.

From Copper Center Pete undertook the hazardous venture of returning to Valdez. He crossed the lake and camped in a tent where there was a man who was badly frozen from having attempted to get



over the glacier a few days before. His name was Evyan. Pete dressed his frozen feet and attended to his wants the best that he could, and then lay down beside his host for a night's rest. When awakening the next morning he discovered that his bed companion was cold in death. Fortunately, when Pete arrived in Valdez he was none the worse, apparently, for his trip.

On October 26 the steamer *Excelsior* took away one-third of the population. Most of those who remained did so with the intention of going out on the November boat, but it failed to come. Straggling parties continued to come over the glacier and to tell of their hairbreadth escapes. One man became so exhausted that he had lain down to sleep on the ice. His companions reasoned with him that it would be better to shoot himself, and even offered to lend him a pistol for the purpose, but it was refused. Another, reasoning that the man should be shot, walked up to him and generously offered to do the shooting. The tired and sleepy man then deliberately arose and was the first of the party to arrive in Valdez.

Our little colony consisted of about one hundred men and nine women, all endeavoring to keep warm in tents and a few log cabins, in the midst of a northern winter. Among them were artists, engravers, and, fortunately, two physicians. The engraver devoted hours to cutting names in gunstocks,



the artists penciled distorted resemblances of others, and a few played with cards. Others passed the time reading everything except the sky.

It was interesting to hear the long-haired six-footers tell of their experiences. One man said:

"The reason I came to Alaska was that I had nothing to lose; and, I'll be hanged, gentlemen, if I didn't lose that!"

Assistant Quartermaster Brown was left in charge of the commissary and, as he was the only official there, he laughingly referred to himself as "the King."

Duncan McCabe, a Californian, and myself sat by a large cookstove, with our feet in the oven, and talked of southern climes while the snow drifted and whipped against the house.

"The oranges," said I, "are most delicious down in old California about this time of year."

"Yes, and the geraniums are in bloom. They bloom all Winter down there," he answered.

Then a glacial blast acted as if it would unroof the house, and we nudged up closer to the stove and held our hands over it.

"I have seen volunteer barley and wild oats headed out there, at this time of year," I remarked.

"So have I. The almond trees are in bloom now, too," he added.

On this topic we talked for a long time,—of

watermelon vines, new potatoes that would insist on volunteering in the orchards where they were not wanted,—and also of strawberry short-cake. The wind continued to whistle, and the weather appeared to me to be getting rapidly colder, but we hugged closer to the stove and continued the interesting conversation.

Our pleasant dreams were suddenly stopped by Charley Brown coming into the room. His head was all muffled up, and after shaking the snow from himself and stamping his feet, he deliberately walked up and placed his bare hand on our stove. Springing back he exclaimed:

“Jehosephat! If you Californians aren’t keeping yourselves warm by talking about your southern climate, with your feet in the oven of a stove that has had no fire in it for three hours!” He then walked out.

I glanced down at the stove that I knew was red hot when we began to talk, and saw white frost on it; then I examined a bucket of water that had been placed near the pipe to keep it warm and found it to be a bucket of ice. I brought in some wood from the adjoining wood-house, while Duncan cut shavings preparatory to starting a fire. Presently Duncan stopped and said:

“Blamed if he wasn’t right! Just talking about that country warmed us up. If I only had a bottle of that climate here now, I could pull the cork and

make any of them believe that their house was on fire! ”

We had no law except a leaning tree and a rope, and needed no other. It was the most orderly community imaginable. Every individual felt that he was a juror in all cases and accountable to the community for his own conduct. This little colony represented a very small percentage of the four thousand people who had invaded that part of the then unknown. The task of overcoming the apparently insurmountable difficulties of exploring that great wonderland was left to them, with their indomitable will, energy and perseverance. Two companions and myself were fortunate in the possession of a barrel of salmon bellies, and consequently we ate salmon bellies twenty-one times per week.

These pioneers would come out on the clear, crisp cold nights, and cluster in groups to witness the beautiful scenes that were enacted on the northern stage, where the sky-curtain trembled in dim aurora. We were embayed in calm seclusion in another world, and had received no word or line from loved ones at home during the preceding fourth of the year, as no boat had rippled the bay for three long months.

They stood hand to hand, heart to heart and soul to soul; hand to hand to explore these unknown wilds; heart to heart to assist their sick and needy companions; and soul to soul to commit to graves

dug in icy soil the frozen bodies of their number who had perished in glacier blizzards.

Three to five thousand feet above and surrounding us were rock-ribbed and impenetrable walls of pinnaced mountains, weird, cold and desolate, statuesque and awe-inspiring. There were cavernous recesses and precipitous walls defiled with gorges of gleaming ice. The high winds sheeted the snow from the pinnaced crests, and the moon, hidden from our view by the mountain, sent its scintillating rays to be reflected down through those particles as if making the whole mountain to appear as though it were burning vividly with a golden flame. The spectacular extravaganza of the north-land!

A party of us stood admiring the display on the night of November 18, and a lady asked her husband what were the weather indications of those flames.

"Well, my dear, those flames have the appearance of smoke in daytime. You have seen these mountains smoke, haven't you?" he answered.

"Yes, this very afternoon."

"That means, because those crests are on the same altitude as the glacier, that a high wind is blowing on the summit; and the flames and smoke plainly say, 'Keep off the glacier!' These northeasters last several days and to-morrow the 'woollies' will hurl great volumes of snow along here and out into

the bay. These naked trees will then whistle the same tune that they always play on such occasions. God help the boys who attempt to cross the glacier to-morrow."

With her head resting on his shoulder, her heart-felt reply was:

"I do hope none will make the attempt."

The next day the blizzard came as predicted. We were content to remain indoors, and scrape the frost off the windows and watch the snow leave the mountain-tops and, driven back into moisture, go floating off over the Pacific in the form of clouds. This nebulous mass of vapor was not merely a ghostly apparition, or evil omen, but the genuine evil itself, on a mission of death to every living thing it might encounter.

That night the only social hall was crowded with men in great overcoats. The surrounded card tables were echoing the clinking of coin, and the fireman shoved large chunks of spruce into the stove, while the wind shook the building with a warning of its terrible power. The gambling suddenly ceased, and with greetings of astonishment, the crowd parted as six men walked into their midst with ice clinging to their beards and hair.

They had crossed the glacier!

Six out of nine had succeeded in the attempt. The last man to drop out of line was Mike Smith, of Chicago.



"Boys, I can go no further," he had said, and had tumbled over in the snow, while a gust of wind had carried the others far down the glacier.

Of those who had succeeded, Spotts, William Grogg and Robert Furgusen were unhurt; but Sylvester Grogg, of St. Joe, Missouri, and Mr. Polowitch and Mr. Cohn of New York, were in a sorrowful condition. They were hurried into a cold room, and bathed in ice water until their footwear and mits could be removed.

One night, seven days after this occurrence, Cohn lay suffering with a fever caused by the exposure. He was resting on a cot in a cabin loft, and when the "woollies" snow-whipped the roof he would start up in wild excitement. Once he arose in bed, and with a look of frenzy gazed towards the stairway, while the lone attendant vainly tried to pacify him. Presently his look changed to a calm expression of happiness and he exclaimed:

"Good Lord! And you have come to me! How good of you!" Then he dropped back on his pillow and mumbled:

"Don't cry, dear; it was for your sake that I came and crossed the glacier, gla-gla-cier." For a few minutes he was in a deep sleep, then he awoke and with a perfectly sane expression said:

"My wife came to see me. She stood right there and looked just as natural as ever. Wasn't that kind of her? Poor girl! She has gone for

something to eat and will be back soon. Say, please tell her not to cry."

He shut his eyes and a tear rolled down his cheek and the lone strange attendant stood by the bed a few minutes, felt his pulse, then turned away and wiped the tears from his eyes, while the north wind moaned a lonely requiem to the dead. On November 28 a procession followed a sled on which were the remains of Henry Cohn, and so there were only five left of the nine who had attempted to cross the glacier in November, 1898.

## CHAPTER VII

*The writer has tried and feels justified in recommending the old infallible preventive of seasickness: It is, STAY ON LAND.*

WE suffered the ennui of solitude and seemed to drift as did the snow from December into January. We watched the year of 1898 go out and 1899 come in, as a mile-post along our adventurous life-trail. The sun winked and blinked at us for a few minutes, and then would hide behind rugged mountains for nearly 24 hours. The luminary began to be a little bolder in January, and laughingly played "peek-a-boo" with us as it flitted from peak to peak. We often spent our Sundays at the little Christian Endeavor meetings conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Goss, Melvin Dempsey and others. They were the good-hearted kind that the gambler probably would describe as "standing pat" on heaven and "sluffing" on hell.

Mrs. Beatty occasionally went into a trance and claimed thereby to be able to see things that others could not. She said that on the afternoon of January 18 she could see a boat steaming up the bay. As this was several days before that date, it was received with interest by many, as the truth of it could be verified on that day. It was unreasonable

to expect a steamer there in the middle of winter, as we knew of none so scheduled.

When the 18th day of January arrived, very little attention was paid to the prophecy, unless it were to deride it. I, being of such an unbelieving nature about such things, was more surprised than others, when precisely as Mrs. Beatty had described, the steamer whistle was heard, and there we saw the little steamer *Wolcott* slowly approaching, on time to a minute. The truthfulness of that prediction was an agreeable surprise to all, and the steamer had no more than cast anchor when dozens of small boats surrounded it. We were all eager to receive news from home, and it was six months old when we got it.

The little steamer was quickly filled with passengers who felt they had served their term at Valdez, and now desired to finish the winter somewhere else. I was making a preliminary survey of the town site of Valdez when the boat arrived, and I, too, boarded for Sitka to record the boundary. Willingly we gave up the limited first-class accommodations to our invalids, and on the night of the 20th, left Prince William Sound for the moving mountains and canyons, peaks and gulches of a storm-maddened ocean.

Notwithstanding that the way below-deck was protected by a hood partly boarded up, barrels of water poured down the stairway. Three of us stood on the steps with our heads out from that

aperture. One exclaimed "Europe!" another "New York!" and I said "Amen!" I was prepared to change my position for one on deck, and by the assistance of the rolling sea, succeeded. I shot through that aperture lengthwise and rolled over on deck in about two feet of salt water. As the boat careened, I rolled back and tried to knock down the mainmast. Holding to it, I struggled to my feet while a barrel of salt water struck the mast above and deluged the back of my neck, while a similar consignment shot up the legs of my trousers from the deck. There was a commotion where the waters met, but it was the internal commotion which was the most troublesome. It took but a minute to become thoroughly drenched, but several minutes to get back into that hole. When everything was favorable, I shot down, head first—in a business sort of a way, but once down below, I did not stand around waiting for someone to tell me what to do, but re-entered the gagging contest with renewed energy.

The wind was a howling success. The boat would enter a wave with a slap and a bang; then it would groan, and so would everybody on board. The propeller was as often whirling and rattling above the water as beneath it, while the waves occasionally dashed over the entire vessel.

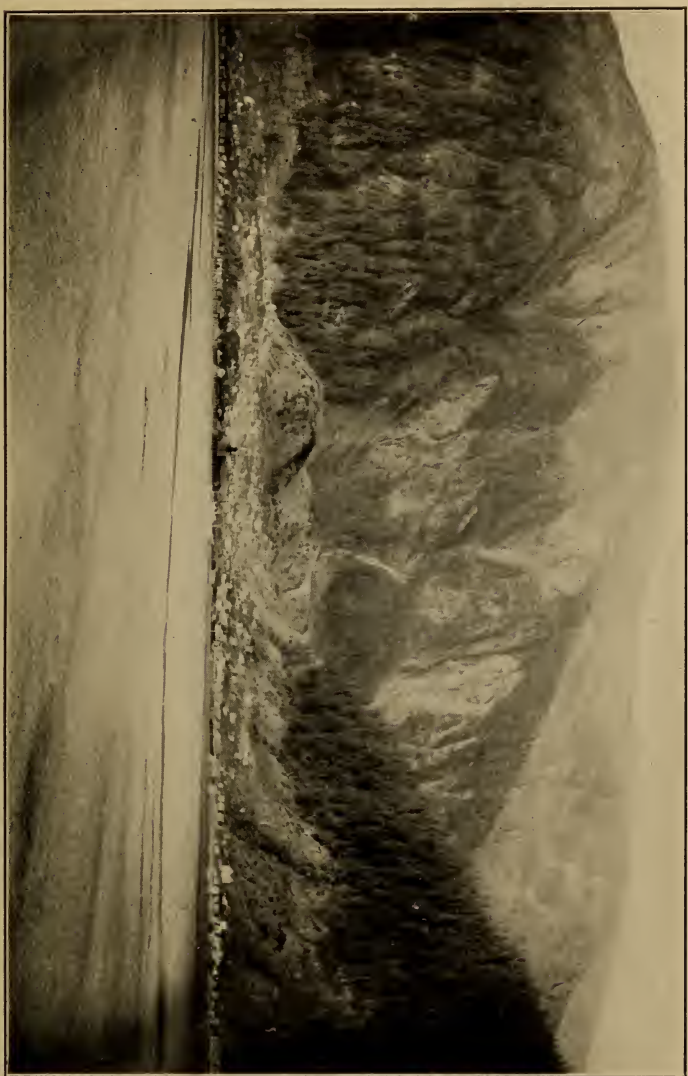
The anger of the storm had abated by the next morning, but that of the sea had not. We had



drifted far to the westward, with no land in sight, and where the balmy breeze indicated that it was just from the "Flowery Kingdom." A man down below had the hiccoughs as well-regulated as a clock, and too well-regulated for my nerves, so I climbed to the deck and held on to a rope beside another man who had them regulated down to half seconds. For two days we bucked the heavy seas without eating, although Captain Crockett, said to be a grandson of Davy Crockett, claimed that he had the best of food on board. That little steamer was afterwards totally wrecked on the coast of Kayak Island.

When we landed at Juneau, the streets and houses appeared to rock to and fro, up and down, for the first twenty-four hours, while we, when walking, braced ourselves cautiously for ground swells. Others, who lived there, said they could notice no ground swells, but we did. We gave lifelike impersonations of a drunken, dissipated lot of rounders, recovering from the spree of their lives, and indeed we were. We felt just that way.

Juneau had been the dumping ground for hundreds of stranded Copper Riverites, who had been shipped out at the expense of the government and steamship companies. They had given the Copper River country a bad name, and I astonished an interrogator by answering that I intended to return in the spring. I met him on the beach at the time, and



*Juncau.*



when the astonished fellow recovered his speech, he called to his companion, who was some distance away, and said:

“O John! Here is a fellow from Copper River!”

John replied that he had seen enough of those fellows, whereupon the first speaker answered:

“Yes, but this durn fool is going back!”

The first two mules brought to Alaska were landed at Sitka, and later, one was brought to Juneau, where, after looking around at the strange mountainland of rock and moss, he deliberately walked down to the beach and committed suicide by drowning. Human beings have been known to commit suicide at Juneau, but the place does not appear to suggest any particular inducements for it.

Juneau is a hillside town, with electric lights, business houses and hotels. Dogteams did a thriving dray business, I remember, and little boys, with stomachs on hand-sleds, scooted down hill with a whoop of warning to pedestrians. There were dance halls, and gaming tables, with fools on one side and thieves on the other; and open-mouthed slot machines gaping for nickels and half dollars. There was a good society, a church, a school and a library. The following bit of Juneau's history was obtained from Reuben Albertstone, a reliable pioneer of Alaska:

“In 1867 an Indian brought into Fort Wrangell a small quantity of rock which was rich with wire

gold. Merchants were induced to outfit a party of prospectors to accompany him to the place of discovery. They pulled their canoes up the coast as far as Sum Dum, where they found gold and refused farther to follow the Indian.

“The disgusted Indian returned to Wrangell and subsequently died in the Victoria Hospital, at Vancouver, but when dying he gave the secret to another Indian, who returned to Wrangell. It was about thirteen years after the first Indian had attempted to show where he had found the auriferous rock, that Indian No. 2 started from Sitka with Richard Harris and Joe Juneau. They landed at what was then known as Big Auk village, now Juneau. It was with considerable persuasion that the Indian succeeded in getting his companions to ascend the steep mountain into Silver Bow Basin. After satisfying themselves of the value of the discovery, they proceeded to hold a miners' meeting and to organize a district which they called 'Harris.'

“Imagine Harris, sitting on a rock, as chairman; Juneau as secretary and the Indian as an interested audience. In this manner motions were made, seconded and carried, and the Indian was satisfied to receive one hundred dollars for his trouble and intelligent assistance.

“When the little town was started, it went by the name of Harrisburg, until Joe Juneau concluded that



his odd name should be handed down to posterity. He reasoned that it was enough for Dick Harris to have his name spread all over a mining district, without having it stuck on all letters received therein. Brooding over these facts, as he stumbled down the trail to Harrisburg, he determined to have a 'blow-out' and he did. He not only invited everybody there to drink to his health, but announced himself as the father of the place. The crowd rent the air with cheers and every man threw up his hat in his exultation at the prospect of another drink at the expense of the self-asserted 'dad.' Again and again they obeyed orders by stepping into line with military precision in front of the saloon bar, and 'looked at' Joe.

"Dancut Peterson mounted an inverted whiskey barrel, and calling the meeting to order, he made the desired motion to change the name of Harrisburg to that of Juneau. It is needless to say that the motion was carried, and that the stream of good feeling continued to flow down their throats. The crowd intended the christening as a joke, but the name stuck. Joe prided himself ever after as being the paternal ancestor of the town, while Dick Harris proclaimed Joe as his personal enemy."

Then my informer watched the curling smoke of his cigar, while he recovered his thoughts from the days when the natives claimed that it was dangerous

to land on Douglass Island because of the many bears.

Most of the men who stopped at our hotel in Juneau, desired neither work nor riches, but simply argument and plenty of it. Their animated voices were incessantly heard in wordy battle. When one subject was exhausted by ridicule, abuse and false representation, some fertile brain would introduce another.

Our social hall was a large room in which was a bar, but it was seldom that any one took a drink. An intoxicated fellow entered and called for a drink, but the bartender refused him, and that was a signal for argument. One contentious old quartzite asked the question:

“Does whiskey do more harm than good?”

He did that to get some one's opinion so that he could oppose him. The bartender said it did, and that he never drank a drop, while others contended that he might as well find fault with food because a few gluttons ate too much.

The subject was gradually turned upon the inspiration of the Bible, and the bartender defended it by producing one from behind the bar and reading from it. Imagine that man, behind a whiskey bar, with the Bible spread thereon, and a dozen prospectors standing in front, not to drink, but to hear that “barkeep” expound the Scriptures! Verily Alaska is a place of unusual incidents!

The Taku winds, so called because of the draught down Taku Inlet, occasionally blow down off those mountains with considerable force. An Indian was asked if it often blew so hard there, and he replied:

“Yep, he blow, he blow—and—by and by he blow some more!”

We could plainly hear the blasting at the famous Treadwell mines, three miles away, and concluded to inspect them. A few minutes' ride on a little steamer and we were landed there. We found a pretty hill-side town composed of workmen and their families. Regular pay for steady employment is conducive to good citizenship, and impressive contentment, just as merry children and cosy homes are indicative of domestic happiness. This mine is not of a high-grade ore, but it gives a guarantee to both capital and labor. At this writing, 1909, a tunnel extends under the mountain twenty-five hundred feet, and Expert Roberts of San Francisco says: “They are uncovering enough workable ore to operate a thousand stamps for a thousand years.”

According to the company's reports for the year of 1899, the total cost of milling and mining was \$1.47 per ton, which left a clear profit of 96 cents. When you enter one of those buildings you know that you are in the worst racket of your life. Attempt to say something, and you realize that while your lips and jaws are working, you can't hear your own voice. This may be a laughable sensation, but you can't

hear your own laugh, and for once you are deaf and dumb.

We looked at the broken rock in water, as it was fed beneath the stamps, and watched it come out as a milky-colored fluid. It is rocked over concentrating tables; and afterwards the water and light material is conducted to the sea, while the mineral is poured into troughs and sacked for other refining processes. We looked at the "glory hole," a huge hopper, several acres in extent at the top. Here rock was being blasted off from its sides to tumble to the bottom. It was wheeled to elevators to be carried up to the mills, there to be reduced to the desired size for the stamps and then fed down through them.

And this is the Treadwell—the largest gold quartz mine in the world! The greatest collection of stamps on the globe! Where four million dollars of gold has been taken out, and mostly for the enrichment of Europeans. Where there are thirty miles of tunnels, and where one can walk out under the harbor with the steamships floating twelve hundred feet above! What a shame that American capitalists will cut each others' throats by gambling in the non-productive stock market, instead of developing our resources which now lie dormant, awaiting the magic wand of financial assistance!

Alaska possesses hundreds of natural opportunities

for millions of wealth to be invested profitably in gold, copper and tin mines. The poor but honest miner can receive no assistance from his own countrymen, while it has been said that the miner is a liar with a hole in the ground, but I say, generally speaking, the promoter hasn't even a hole.



## CHAPTER VIII

*Skagway to many voyagers has been the gateway to the Yukon, to hardships and to death; to others to fortune and to happiness; while to a few it has been the gateway to the penitentiary.*

I ARRIVED at Skagway after a day's ride on a steamer. Failing to secure a private room, I engaged a bed among about forty snoring room-mates. Sleep was impossible, because there was no system about their snoring. Although the performance was a medley, it was by no means a tuneful discord. The snorers were about evenly matched, nose and nose, when a new entry undertook to win the race by a sudden burst of energy, a regular sprint of a snore that put him far in the lead. He excited my curiosity and admiration. As he was from my end of the room I proceeded mentally to bet my last dollar on him, when he suddenly "flew the track," jumped the fence and collapsed. Evidently his pop-valve was out of order.

I paid four dollars for a room to be used the next night, with the hope of securing some rest; but that was another disappointment. A couple committed matrimony in the same house, and certainly I shall remember the incident, whether they do or not. About one hundred barbarians organized a discord-



*Skagway.*



ant serenade with tinpans and cowbells, cornets and horns, and when that hideous turmoil of human hyenas ceased, the howling, barking canines continued it for the rest of the night. There were dogs there for every individual, valued at prices ranging from five to five hundred dollars each.

All nationalities were represented at Skagway. There was the gasconading mountebank as well as the secretive gambler. There were others who showed refinement and whose speech betrayed deep thought and erudition. Others again were dressed in all sorts of costumes. A few wore red hoods with long tassels hanging down their backs, causing one to have visions of Turks or Arabs.

An aged man was sitting in the hotel lobby, busily engaged in figuring on his red-tanned boot with a pencil. Presently he said:

"Say, mister, did you ever figure on what Klondike is now doing for the world, and the gold standard?"

"I confess that I have not," I answered.

"Well, sir, I am nearly eighty years old, and I have spent most of my days in mining countries. I have been in Alaska for more than twenty years. Old man Church has been there thirty years. But that is not what I started in to say. You probably know that the United States was a pauper in '46 and '47. Farmers were trading work and they didn't know what money looked like. The discovery of

gold in California brought good times, and people pricked up their ears and acted as if there was something in life worth living for. Young men who had returned from the West, bought land, married and settled down, and put their gold into circulation. Well, the discovery of gold in Australia did the same thing for the world, and so did that of Africa; and now Klondike steps into the ring just as the precious metal was being cornered and hard times were coming on. Why, my dear fellow, it would surprise us if we could follow only one thousand dollars of that gold which goes down to the States and pays debts. It would be seen that it paid a million dollars of debts in no time. And it is put in circulation where it is most needed.

“Of course, it is not always properly started. I have known rattle-brains up there who have never realized that such good luck only happens once in a lifetime, and they are there, now, just throwing away the money with both hands. One hand is not fast enough for them, and they keep waiters busy uncorking champagne at ten dollars per bottle. They won't last long. I knew one fellow to cry because some sharpers got him drunk, took eight hundred dollars of his Forty-mile dust and instead placed a deed to a claim which they had located up a creek in his pocket. Then they lit out on a down-river boat and there he was broke and blubbering about not knowing what to do with a mining claim.



"Well, old John Healey says, 'Ye blubberin' idiot, come in to my store and git what ye want of grub, and go up there and see what ye have. Sink a hole and find out about it, fer ye might have something good; and I'd rather have ye owin' me fer the grub, than to see ye feelin' bad and busted.'

"Well, he did load up with grub, and went up there and struck it rich, and now he is one of those fellers who can't spend money fast enough. Why, he says he thinks he used good judgment in buying that claim!"

Then my informer clapped his thighs and laughed, and presently he continued:

"There's another 'Sweet-William' sort of a fellow, who is now engaged to marry a whole family of chorus girls. Just as rapidly as possible he marries one, and she gets a divorce and divides his money with him, and then he marries another. He says he'll marry their mother, after he gets through with the girls, if his money holds out. I'll gamble that he won't have any money after the old woman divides with him. She may give him back his empty purse, but I doubt it!

"But—say! *That's* not what I started in to tell. I just figured out that it would require a pack-train of four hundred animals to bring out one year's production of gold from the Klondike. Now, if you allow each animal his usual thirty-three feet on the trail, you will have a train two and a half miles long!

That's what a pencil and that old boot can do with a little assistance from me and the Klondike!"

"I suppose you are leaving the country for good, are you not?" I asked.

"Yes, I reckon I am," he answered. "I have not been back home since I first came to Alaska. You see, directly after I came up here, my wife died, and my little girl was well taken care of by relatives. I paid for her care and education, and now I hear she has married and is doing well. I have sent for her and her husband to meet me here, and I intend to go back home with them. I have dust enough to keep them and me, and I don't want to bother with it. I expect them on the next boat. I have been here for nearly a month, now."

Then a large huskie dog came into the room and laid his head on the old man's lap and inquiringly looked up. The old man stroked the dog and said:

"Yes, old Mose. I know you want to ask something. It is too bad for you that you can't talk, but it probably is a good thing for *me*; for you would be pesterin' me to death, askin' questions. I suppose you want to know when the old man is going to hit the trail back to Dawson. Well, old boy, we never will see that trail again, for we are going to where there's no sour dough, but the luxury and ease we both deserve."

"Your dog?" I asked.

"Yes, always has been mine, ever since he was a

pup. He once saved my life. You should have heard an Englishman apologize to this dog! I loaned Mose to him to teach his dogs to work. He had Mose on the lead, and continued to say 'gee' until Mose had his sled nearly off the trail and ready to roll down the canyon. Then the Englishman yelled, 'whoa!' Mose stopped and the Englishman said:

"'Ah, beg your pawden! I meant *haw*, dontcher know!'

"Mose just crossed over to the other side of the trail and looked back at that Englishman with a genuine dog-laugh, and the driver seemed never to get through apologizing."

Then my entertainer clapped his thigh and laughed heartily.

"I suppose you place a high value on him?" I ventured to ask.

Immediately his countenance sobered, and while he affectionately stroked the dog, he replied:

"Mister, don't ask me to place a value on my partner. I couldn't think of it! Why, if I should lose my poke of dust, rather than to part with Mose, we would hit the trail back and try for another raise."

Evidently, this was another of those frontier noblemen, whose characters stand out in such strong contrast with the spendthrifts he had mentioned, both of whom have since descended the ladder to the bot-

tom rung. When the latter was asked what he had done with the fortune he had made on the Klondike, he held up three fingers and exclaimed:

“Three blondes!”

A meeting had been held down at the wharf, a year before, to rid the town of “Soapy” Smith and his gambling and robbing clique. “Soapy” heard of the meeting and went down there, armed with a rifle, to break it up. Frank Reid was left on guard, and he gave up his life for the honor of Skagway. As “Soapy” approached they both fired with fatal results, and their two graves are up yonder beside the trail. “Soapy” Smith’s real name was Jefferson R. Smith, of whom the “Tramp Poet,” William De Vere, wrote the verses entitled “Jeff and Joe,” describing an incident that happened at Creede, Colorado.

Skagway, the town of sudden and unexpected birth, is not without its history of startling and pathetic incidents. An account of the following tragedy was related to me in detail by an Indian interpreter, and corresponds with the records in Skagway’s court:

Bert Horton and his wife, from Oregon, were spending the first year of their married life in Alaska, and had left Skagway in a small rowboat for a summer’s outing. The day of their departure was one of the long summer sort whose sunshine and shade are conducive to day-dreaming.

They directed their boat down along the shore of that long slender arm of the sea, known as Lynn



Canal, searching for a quiet camping place among the trees, where moss covered the ground and wild roses breathed a welcome. Through an opening in the forest they noted an inviting locality, and landing their boat on the beach, climbed to it. There they erected their tent, put up a Yukon stove, and soon were partaking of the first meal in their summer home. Happy? Why not? They belonged to the class that commands respect, and they enjoyed the affection of their many friends. They possessed even more, and that was their mutual contentment in each other's love. They had come from the humdrum of civilization to enjoy recreation, and now, after their noonday meal, they sat on a moss-covered log, hand in hand, and admiringly gazed on the placid water, talking of their hopes and prospects.

Lynn Canal is not always calm, but often its surface is disturbed by sudden squalls; and running tides make it dangerous to those in small canoes at such times. As the evening's twilight stealthily absorbed the day, little birds twittered in the trees, and occasionally a lone raven flew past, or alighted for a moment on a near-by hemlock, and there mockingly repeated his doleful message. Who knows but that the raven's lone, sepulchral "caw" grated with ominous sound on the nerves of that delicately refined woman?

There was being prepared an Indian marriage feast, "potlach" and carnival, only a few miles away,



where wild-eyed, coarse-haired and uncouth savages expected to indulge in fantastic orgies and hilarious revelry. They were to be stimulated by potations of "hooch," a liquor obtained by the crude fermentation of molasses, farinacious substances and fruit. Three Indians had been dispatched to the Mission to procure presents for the bride's parents and the "potlatch" had been delayed until their return.

During the night a storm arose and the returning Indians were drowned evidently near the point where the white caps lashed the beach by the summer camp of the Hortons. The squall calmed down when the sun arose the next morning, and the day promised to be another happy one for the campers. Save for the lonely call of that dark-plumed messenger, the raven, there was no indication that the sun's rays would witness a bloody tragedy—a horrible murder committed by fiends incarnate.

When the three Indians failed to return from the Mission, there was great uneasiness among the tribe, and one Indian with a murderous heart swore by the Great Spirit that he would go in search of his relatives, who had been sent out the night before. If accident had befallen them, dire vengeance would be meted out by his own hands.

He paddled his canoe along the shore until he arrived at the camp of the white people. There he found a paddle belonging to his relatives, which had floated up to the beach, and he demanded of the

white man an explanation of how it happened to be so near his tent. Receiving an evasive answer the Indian returned to his teepee swearing vengeance.

There he commanded others to accompany him to the camp of the white people, where he promised to show them that the "white dogs" had murdered his relatives. This brutal savage already glorified in the distinction of being a murderer, and had shown a disposition to add other blood stains to his record. His capriciousness and unreliability had proclaimed him to be an individual feared even by his own tribe. Mandatorily he bade them row the boat, while he sat in the stern, and with a dark scowling countenance vainly cast his murderous eye over the water for some signs of the lost ones. There was no word spoken by the paddlers, as the saturnine pilot might construe anything said as a reflection on his purpose. When they approached the shore where the happy people were camped, this brute commenced to curse the whole white race.

The white man came out and sat on a log where he and his loving wife had sat the evening before, and watched the Indians make the landing, little realizing the condition of their deluded brains. The leader jumped ashore, and picking up the paddle, exclaimed:

"This is the paddle that belonged to my relatives! The whites have murdered them! White dogs! White devils!"

He then raised his gun and fired, and the white man fell dead beside the log. As his wife ran out of the tent to see what was the matter, she, too, received a deadly missile. She fell, but with that strange maternal instinct to cling to life, she attempted to rise. Then the murderer commanded a boy to run and cut her throat. The boy hesitated, but when the gun was pointed at him, he ran to that frail body, caught her hair, as she vainly struggled to arise, and as she screamed, "O Lord! O Lord!" he did as he was bidden. The moss and leaves were crimson with her life-blood.

The others approached and stood still, speechless with the horror of the crime, while the enormity of it all slowly penetrated the thick skull of the villain. The lonely raven flew overhead and, alighting on a hemlock, repeated, "O Lord! O Lord!"

The murderer looked in startled astonishment, then raised his gun to fire, but the dark-winged messenger repeated "O Lord! O Lord!" and flew away. One of the others intimated that the raven should be treated as a sacred bird, but the villain replied:

"He too much talk, talk, talk. Heap all-time talk!"

The Indians returned to their village, and while the account of that terrible crime was whispered among them, great care was taken that it should not reach the ears of the whites. Almost every day the murderous Indian could be seen walking along the

beach and occasionally showing his antipathy towards the ravens by firing at some one of those dark-coated messengers.

He spent the evenings listening to the teachings of a few Salvationists who had invaded the Indian camp. They earnestly taught that Jesus would forgive and save, and it acted as a healing balm to his bleeding conscience.

"Does Jesus know all?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply, "confess and be forgiven; He will save you."

His bushy head shook with emotion as he walked forward and said:

"I will confess. He will save me! He will protect me! I killed a white man and a woman, and their bodies now lie near the beach of the canal, beneath a blanket! Yes, I killed them, and now I am saved!"

The confession was a surprise to those who heard it. Officers were sent for, and soon the actors in that awful tragedy were on their way to the white man's justice. The prime mover of the crime was tried and sentenced. When asked why judgment should not be enacted, he stood motionless. A raven flew overhead, and his call startled him when he stepped forward and said:

"Yes, I made a mistake! My people were drowned and not killed by the white people, and I am willing to shed my blood because of what I did.

But, white man, you lie! You say Jesus save me!  
You lie! "

The great ocean steamers plow the waters of Lynn Canal, their passengers lounging on the railings and gazing at the gravelly beach and the wooded shore, where once there was a happy summer camp, and where, the Indians assert, a lone, dark glistening raven often alights in the drooping boughs of a hemlock, and mournfully repeats, "O Lord! O Lord! "



## CHAPTER IX

*Secretary Seward once was asked what he considered the most important act of his public career, and he replied: "The purchase of Alaska; but it will take the people a generation to find it out."*

I BOARDED the steamer *Cottage City*, leaving Skagway, and landed in the historical town of Sitka on February 20, 1899. Our route was one of those aquatic dreams—smooth passageways bordered with rocky shores and forests, so characteristic of those inland waters of America's wonderland. There was one exception to this, however, and that was the passage of Cross Sound, where the open sea rolls in, and where boats, Sitka bound, wallow in the troughs of the waves for a few minutes.

A young man who was on board remarked that he had come all the way from Seattle, and had not been seasick. In reality he had not been to sea, but had traveled on one of the longest stretches of calm salt water on the globe, and did not know it. He thought he had been on the ocean and was bragging about it.

The steward ordered the waiters to put nothing on the tables until after we had crossed the sound, as we were nearing it, and from its rough appearance

there must be a storm outside. This young man paid no attention to that, for why should he? Had he not been to sea? I moved over to a cushioned seat which was bolted to the mast, directly opposite my seafaring companion. This was no more than accomplished when such things as plates, knives and forks, which were already on the table, went flying across the room and music sheets from off the piano followed in close pursuit. The loose chairs, including the one occupied by the self-assumed "sea-salt," went tumbling also. The young man performed an acrobatic feat in the air and dashing over towards me, stuck a finger familiarly in one of my eyes, becoming inextricably mixed up with his chair on its return trip. With my one eye I saw him lying against the wall, looking up between the chair rungs and regarding me with an expression of wild wonder, as if I had been hypnotizing him to perform in such a ridiculous manner.

It appeared to dawn upon him gradually that there was something about this seafaring business, and also about his stomach, that he did not understand. He disengaged himself from the chair, and left it to continue its gyrations, while he crawled on all fours to his stateroom. Fortunately it was near by, for he remarked afterwards that he arrived there just in the nick of time.

The insertion of a bit of history may make the visit to the old town of Sitka more interesting. From

the historians we learn that the country now known as Alaska was discovered on July 5, 1741, by one of Vitus Behring's ship captains named Chirikof. Bering or Behring was a Dane in the employ of the Russians, and died December 8th, of the same year.

Of course, it is probable that these shores had been trodden by white men before that time, but not in an official capacity. Credit is not always given to the real discoverers for their work. The Kit Carsons and not the Fremonts are the real pathfinders. Recently we have had some explorers in Alaska who possibly may discover New York or Chicago one of these days.

Forty years after Bering discovered Alaska, a decree was issued by the Russian Government which gave a company the exclusive privilege to trade and hunt in its new possessions. It also advanced two hundred thousand rubles from the public treasury, to be paid in twenty annual installments, without interest. It is needless to say that the stockholders of the Company were closely connected with the Royal Household. This Company also bound itself to support a Greek Catholic Church wherever an opportunity to Christianize the natives might occur.

Baranoff was appointed manager of that Company in 1790. He was noted for his drunkenness, lewdness and lying, although in his report of his fight with the natives at Nutchek, he said: "As for myself, the Lord has protected me." He was a

model of devotion, if carrying religion into business is holiness; for he caught his fur-bearing animals, fish and seals in the name of the Lord, then, very possibly, he would indulge in the worst profanity and go on a drunken debauch.

Baranoff landed on that island, about six miles north of the present town of Sitka, on May 25, 1799. He built a post and left for Kadiak during the autumn of 1800. That post was destroyed and its occupants massacred by an attacking party of about one thousand Indians, in June, 1802. Only three Russians escaped, and after making a hazardous journey along the several hundreds of miles of sea-coast, reported the disaster to Baranoff.

In 1804, Baranoff, with one hundred and twenty Russians, followed by eight hundred Aleuts in their bidarkies, or skin canoes, returned to make war on the Kolosh tribes, and to reassert their claim to Sitka. The Russians were repulsed in a pitched battle near the mouth of Indian Creek, with a loss of twenty-six men, and Baranoff was wounded, while the Lord apparently protected the Indians. They were compelled to do the right thing by holding a conference with the Indians, who courteously allowed them to stake off a limited area of land where afterwards they built up the town of New Archangel, or Sitka.

Here they forged iron, cast church bells, and built ships that sailed as far south as Mexico. They traded with the California Indians, and established there a



colony of farmers on a river that was afterwards named Russian River. Baranoff petitioned to be relieved, but his request was not granted until 1818. He started home, but died on the way at the age of seventy-two years. He had spent twenty-eight years as a tyrannical ruler among priests, Indians and convicts. During that time he had cleared six millions of dollars for his Company, and meanwhile Napoleon had been attempting to overthrow the life of his government in another hemisphere.

Poor Sitka! It has struggled for a hundred years simply to hold its own, and not a very sightly place for a town at that. It was attacked by Indians as late as 1856. After a hot battle for two hours the natives were repulsed; they left one hundred of their dead around those old block-houses, up there on the hill.

Sitka has a thrilling history of mingled romance, worship and feasts; crime, war and murder; and it has survived different forms of ownership, from the domination of whiskey to "hoochenoo."

Slowly we approached Sitka, where the Indian town adjoins it on our left. Numerous rocky islets were between us and the wide ocean. We landed at a wharf where a uniformed sentry paced back and forth, but he does that only on steamer days. We passed through a low shed of a warehouse, where about twenty squaws sat with their backs against a wall, having numerous articles of their handiwork,



such as moccasins and buckskin purses, spread out for sale in front of them.

We turned to the right and stood on a rocky prominence where once was Baranoff Castle. It was there that the formal transfer of Alaska from one foreign power to another was made on October 18, 1867, by the lowering of the Russian flag, and the hoisting of that of the United States.

An Indian who was present at the time remarked:

"We gave the Russians the privilege to live among us, but not the right to sell us and our whole country to another power."

Yes, there once stood the Baranoff Castle and it was there that the Russian ruler displayed his fits of good feeling by giving suppers—feasts they were—where the flow of wine and stronger drinks resulted in drunken orgies and the wildest revelry. It was there also that he issued edicts which sent from his presence official dignitaries retiring like menials.

After Baranoff's career had ended, the impression which the lonely mansion always gave to those who were familiar with its history was that its dark and dismal halls were frequented with visitations from the dead. Old women, who once had been the girl guests at the castle's receptions, declared they saw ghostly apparitions floating around the place, and that they believed it was visited frequently by the spirit of the one beloved daughter of Baranoff.

This harbor of ghosts, reminiscent of wild trage-

dies and of scarcely less savage scenes of dissipation, was doomed to disappear, for one dark night it passed away in a lurid glare of fiery destruction.

An era of military control followed the transfer, which was accompanied by drunken debauchery. The soldiers exerted a demoralizing influence over the natives of Sitka and even murdered some of them. The worst curse that can happen to a country is that it be subjected to military rule. Human beings of all mixtures are more peaceable in the enjoyment of individual prosperity, even without the mandate of written law, than when placed under an arbitrary military autocrat who has the power to order his automata to murder, whether for right or wrong. Military rule is all right in war, but it is an enemy to peace and good citizenship. The majority of people are good and just, therefore let the majority rule, and you will have law, pure and simple.

I attended a church in Sitka where the minister prayed for his sect and all the public officials of the United States, and I felt slighted. On my return to the boarding-house, I witnessed a fight between a raven and three chickens over the possession of a bone. The raven whipped the chickens, then a pup butted in, but a hog—like monopolists the world over—finally took possession of the prize.

Ravens are the city's scavengers and are very tame. During my stay in Sitka some boys proved

that a raven could count up to seven. There was an old unoccupied house where the ravens were accustomed to alight and make remarks about people as they passed, but they would not alight on the roof if they knew a person was in the house. Five boys entered the house and came out, one at a time, the last one lingering for half an hour, but the ravens refused to return until he had come out; whereupon they immediately took possession of the roof and bragged about their cunning. Six boys tried the same experiment with like result, and so did seven, but when eight entered and seven came out, the ravens became mixed in the count. The boys could fool them, after that, if they could assemble a crowd of more than seven. I had often wondered how Poe's raven could say "nevermore," but I found that an Alaska raven can say words that are not even in the dictionary. He has the vocabulary of a common scold, and the inquisitiveness of a village gossip.

I was persuaded by an enemy in the disguise of a friend, to take a Russian bath as administered in Sitka. If you are convinced that your sins have found you out, and are sufficiently desperate to risk the punishment, take this advice: Leave your hope with your clothes in the little hell adjoining. When you enter that place of torment, you realize that the breathing element is pure steam, caused by hot rock placed in a barrel of water. You observe next that water is running from every part of your body, and

feebly you grope in that vaporous atmosphere to a bunk, hayrack or guillotine, where you proceed to lay yourself out in as becoming an attitude as possible, to await the end that you feel has overtaken you. As you observe two rawhide strings which once served you as legs, you begin to make a mental calculation of how long it will require for you to shrink up so that you can roll off that place of torture and drop through a crack in the floor; or, if you should remain, how soon you will be able to float away, as a ghostly apparition.

This thought may arouse you to make a last desperate effort, and in the struggle you may float to a barrel of cold water, where you pour a bucketful on what is left of your person, and then escape into the ante-room. There, when drying yourself, you will realize the need of a magnifying glass with which to make an inspection of what is left of your anatomy.

After I had indulged in this bath, my expression must have exposed my reflections, for they asked me, at the boarding-house, if I had not taken a Russian bath. I then proceeded to take on another load of sins by declaring it was simply delightful and by advising my interrogator to try it. I generally bathe in the ocean or the river in the springtime of the year, and once took a foot-bath in Copper River that extended several feet above my head, but one Russian bath is sufficient for a lifetime.

I spent three weeks in getting tired of Sitka scen-

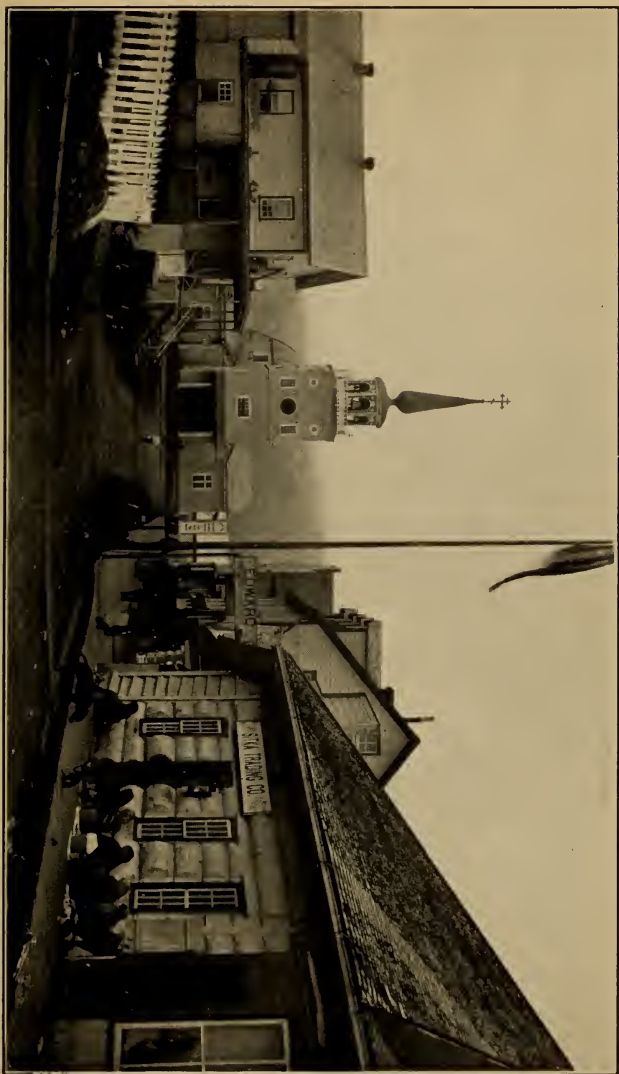


ery, of tumbled-down log structures, blockhouses of untold history, and the old graveyard on the hill where are headboards on which are inscribed death-dates that have been dimmed by more than a hundred winters.

In Baranoff's historical works (see Vol. 33, page 705), he says of the old church at Sitka: "The Sitka Cathedral contains altars, which were separated from the body of the church by a partition, the doors of which are gilt, and the pilasters mounted with gold capitals. There were eight silver candlesticks, more than eight feet in length, and a silver chandelier hanging from the center of the dome which was supported by a number of columns of the Byzantine order. On the altar was a miniature tomb of the Saviour in gold and silver. The vestments and implements were also rich in gold and jewels. The books were bound in gold and crimson velvet, and adorned with miniatures of the evangelists set in diamonds. The communion was a cup of gold similarly embellished; the miter was covered with pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds."

It does not astonish me that some United States soldiers, in 1869, were drummed out of the service for attempting to rob that church. I had long desired to inspect the interior, and the opportunity now was presented. I entered the church to see it, as well as to pay my respects to the dead. A funeral was being conducted there according to the orthodox cere-





*Sitka, Indian Avenue, Greek Church.*



monies of the Greek Church. The blue-domed building with its minaret surmounted by a triple barred cross gave it a mosque-like appearance. As there were no seats, everybody knelt and listened to the solemn chant led by a long-bearded, long-haired and long-robed Muscovite priest, while the choir of little boys creditably rendered their part.

The priest constantly swung his censor. It was a kind of covered saucer that hung from his arm, and emitted a cloudlet of smoke. It could smoke but you could not, unless you were willing to be consigned to a place where smoking is said to be a continuous performance. One man attempted to smoke a cigarette in that church, but was at once escorted to the door by an observant worshiper. Arriving outside, however, the stern censor of decorum and morality asked the offender if he possessed another cigarette that he could spare.

I came away from that funeral with the consoling thought that if a good man took the Copper River route, he would, even through that side entrance, find eternal rest. Of course many would be jealous, because he did not follow their particular trail, but he would be there anyway.

There was one beautiful painting of the Madonna which has left an indelible impression. I failed to find any one who knew when it had been painted, as they said it had been done by some old Greek master, hundreds of years ago, but that there was no positive

record of it known. I was also informed that a noted American heiress had offered \$50,000 for it, and her offer had been refused; also that \$100,000 had been offered as security for its safe return, if the church would allow it to be placed on exhibition at the Chicago Fair, but that, too, had been refused.

No artist living at the present day could have painted a more beautiful and harmonious expression of countenance. That alone, of all the sights of Sitka, was to me the most impressive, and, in leaving, the one I wished ever to retain.

## CHAPTER X

*One Coast Siwash tribe's genealogy goes back to the raven, and those birds have gone into mourning ever since the hatching of that particular nest of eggs.*

THERE are Indians in Alaska who trace their origin to the beaver, and most of those tribes make totem poles by cutting large images of their supposed ancestors in trees. The bark is peeled from the tree, and then they carve upon it unsightly pictures of their assumed ancestors, one above another, until they use up about all of their tree and exhaust their fund of fantastic delusions. These poles are erected in front of their dwellings, so that all may read their illustrated book of genealogy. During my stay at Sitka, one family entered into a dispute with another over the heritage of a totem pole, and Judge Tuttle was appealed to for a decision. It is to the credit of the Indians of the interior of Alaska, that they have no totem poles, and laugh at the ridiculous superstition of the "Fish-eaters," as they call them.

Occasionally these poles are worth more than a passing notice, for sometimes they disclose tribal history. The chief of the Bear tribe became chief by a succession of personal efforts and his merit, and did not inherit his position from an ancestry of chiefs.



Like self-made men of all colors, he was justly proud of the result. In erecting his totem pole, he carved on it the tracks of a bear ascending to the top, and on the throne he carved the image of a bear, representing Chief Bear, of the Bear tribe. However, he should have placed a notice thereon, saying, "This is a bear!" I have heard other legends relating to that same pole, for almost every Indian one meets in Alaska is carrying a liberal supply of legends around in his head.

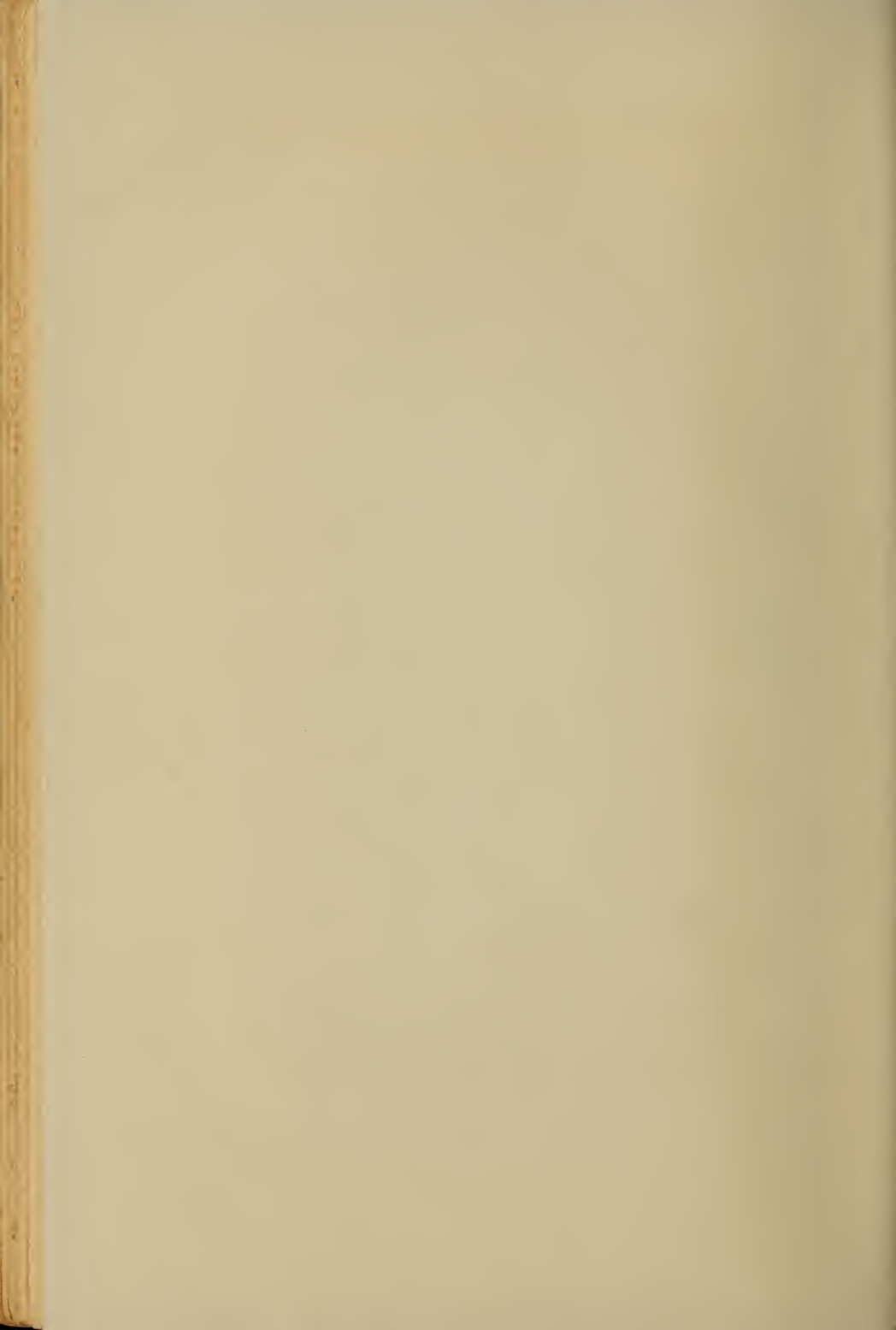
There are many different kinds of pride existing among the human races. I have known educated white persons who took a pride in writing so that no one else could read it. They scratched in their names as if they desired to conceal their identity from any one who should attempt to decipher the chiography.

I have known a man to be proud of the fact that he owned a bulldog and could lead him around by a string; this appeared to give him a feeling of superiority over others who had no bulldogs, as if he thought they could not afford such a luxury. It was a very appropriate combination, as the bulldog added dignity and brains to his owner.

By the term tribe, as used in relation to those Indians—and to most other Indians, for that matter—is meant families that have intermarried until great numbers are blood relations. There are but two distinct classifications of the Alaskan Indians; those of



*Totem Poles at Wrangell.*



the interior, and the fish-eating Siwash of the coast. It is doubtful if any scientist could determine the dividing line between the mythical Esquimos and their southern neighbors. Certain tribes of Indians are short, rotund and fleshy, being made so by their blubber-eating and sedentary habits. It is plainly evident, however, that all the Esquimo Indians are not as they were represented in the old school geographies.

Captain Roald Amundsen, in the report of his trip through the Northwest Passage, and of the Esquimos he then encountered, said: "They were fine men, these Esquimos, tall and strongly built. They were, moreover, slim, and as I said before, tall." The time has arrived when we must refer to the Esquimos as Esquimo Indians, and discontinue the deception that they are a separate class of human beings.

I remember having seen a sawmill at Sitka, which was run by Indians, and there are Indian carpenters who have built their own neat cottages. They have many symmetrically hewn canoes; one of those that I examined measured eight feet in beam and was forty-five feet long. They said they had much larger ones.

In company with a friend I took a stroll out to Indian Creek. We passed a church where we were told that the minister's sentences were repeated by an interpreter. We passed also an industrial school, then a museum; the former with animate,

and the latter with inanimate, curiosities. We left the town and walked along a highway that had been cut before our fathers were born, and found Indian Creek to be a beautiful clear stream, with a suspension foot-bridge across it.

The road wound back from here, through evergreen, hemlock, spruce and cedar trees, overshadowing a dense undergrowth. There was an occasional cleared spot where benches were placed for the convenience of lovers, poets and other moony mortals. It is an idyllic spot. No wonder that the Sitka papers have contained numerous marriage notices and original poems. Among the soul-stirring, heart-rending and love-sighing poems that the emotional natures of Sitka have blasted out, one ends each stanza with the euphonious expression thus:

“Let her go, Gallagher! Let her go!”

A white man who was so poetical as to marry a dusky maiden of the forest, known by the name of Anna Hootz, was evidently in a poetical mood when his squaw eloped with a pig-eyed Chinaman. A few explanations are necessary for the reader to fully appreciate his poetical effort. He should understand that the Coast Indians grow up in canoes, and consequently are crooked of limb, and more or less crippled, and that all Indians, like Japs, are “pigeon-toed”; also, there is no perfume so attractive to a squaw-man as the scent of old dried salmon. This poem was published in a pamphlet, entitled “Poems



on Alaska, by Alaskans." Two blocks of it are submitted as samples from the ledge:

"And the scent of the salmon lingers yet  
In the place where she used to be,  
And while life lasts I shall never forget  
How sweet its perfume to me.  
And the blear-eyed children on her knee,  
With legs adapted to crooked boots,—  
The patentee sign of Anna Hootz.

And now I sit by the smoky fire  
Through the day and twilight's dim,  
Cherishing only a wild desire  
To build an elaborate funeral pyre  
And get one chance at Jim;  
I'd mangle and tear him limb from limb  
And boil him well in a copper pot  
In a place where Anna Hootz is not."

We returned to town over that picturesque highway, and, as many have done before, gazed long to the northward upon the interesting scene of Mt. Edgecomb, an extinct volcano resembling a carbuncle that had lost its heart.

## CHAPTER XI

*Nature sometimes gives us the impression that she is not always just. A scientist found a bug on the Malispina glacier upon which he inflicted the name of Malanenchytracus Solifigus, and the bug died, but the scientist lived!*

As it was nearing the time for explorations in the Alaskan Range, I left Sitka, the place of seven feet of annual rainfall, and government officials who have been too prominent in politics at some time or another.

It was during this summer that E. H. Harriman chartered a steamer and, accompanied by a select number of scientists, spent some time in Yakutat Bay and various other places along the Alaska Coast. It is probable that it was the greatest coterie of wise-acres that ever visited the North, and it is vastly to their credit that they refrained from renaming and rediscovering everything they saw. They attempted, however, to change an arm of Yakutat Bay, known as Disenchantment Bay, to Russell Fiord. They did not see all of the glaciers in Alaska, but on beholding a few of them they inflicted upon them the college names of Harvard, Yale, Smith, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Wellesley, Wells and Amherst. They did give a few glaciers the appropriate and original names of Stair-

way and Serpentine; but other scientists may come along and change them.

Just think how the American zoologists have abused the poor little white-tailed deer! Bodheart, as far back as 1785, inflicted on it the name of *Cervus virginianus*. Every time a scientist caught one of the species during the next hundred years, evidently he turned it loose to drag another name after it. In 1884 they started in on another century of names by calling that deer *Cariacus virginianus*; in 1895, *Dorcelaphus virginianus*; in 1897, *Dorcelaphus americanus*; in 1898, *Mazama americanus*, and in 1902, *Dama virginiana*. Why not insert White-tail-deer for *iana* and say *Dama Virgin White-tail-deer*?

It does not surprise me in the least that this deer is so wild and timid. He generally runs when frightened, and unlike the Blacktail deer, does not stop to gaze at a hunter, but when last seen is always trying to uphold his true name by flying his white flag. It is a crime against Nature for scientists to twist that deer's tail into so dangerously unmanageable names.

When we left Yakutat our boat lowered and rose with the sea-swells as her engines drove us westward at a twelve-knot gait. We looked up twenty thousand feet at the top of Mt. St. Elias, and also saw the great Malispina glacier that rested at its base. This glacier was discovered by Alejandro Malispina, a scientist, who accompanied a Spanish expedition along that coast in 1791.

We crossed in front of the Copper River delta, sixty-five miles in width, over which the wintry blasts are hurled from the interior. This river was first located by Caudra, second in command under Artega.

We steamed around by Nutchek Bay, where on May 12, 1778, Captain Cook cast anchor to repair a leakage in his ship. There was then and is now an Indian village at that place. No doubt there are old wrinkled natives there who could tell their grandchildren of their battle with the whites, whom they repulsed so long ago when Baranoff was the White Chieftain.

We passed Fidalgo Bay, named after Lieutenant Salvador Fidalgo, of the same expedition that discovered Valdez Bay in 1790. At Valdez we found squalor and misery, many of the half-starved prospectors being afflicted with scurvy. Charley Brown had condemned a government mule, and it had been gladly eaten by the inhabitants. A whale had drifted in to shore, and a portion of it had been eaten. Many had come over the glacier, and others had lost their lives in the attempt, and the little graveyard had been enlarged. Here is an incident worthy of detail:

A dog-team galloped up and stopped in front of the only pretense of a hotel in Valdez. The night was dark, as the northern winter nights always are, when the moon is not shining. The dogs immediately lay down, almost exhausted from their long

trip, and the two men soon were surrounded by inquiring friends. One of the two said:

"What do you think, fellows? We passed a woman, just this side of Saw-Mill Camp, who was pulling a sled on which was her sick husband. We remonstrated against the undertaking of crossing the glacier, but she replied that they might as well die up there as anywhere else, as it meant certain death to stop. Our dogs could only pull our outfit, and there wasn't grub enough for all, so we were compelled to leave them. They will be at the last timber to-night and if somebody doesn't go to their rescue, they will be dead by this time to-morrow."

A man stepped out from the crowd and said:

"I'll go for one! Now who else has a good dog-team to splice in with mine?"

"I'm your huckleberry!" announced another.

It was three o'clock in the morning before they had made their selection of dogs and were ready to start on that hazardous trip.

"We'll be on the first bench by daylight, and have them here before to-morrow's midnight," said one, as he straightened out the team. "That dog Rex will be pulling against the collar when we return, and Sport will get us back if he barks every jump for the whole of that sixty miles!"

"Yea, Boys! Stand in there, Leader! Mush, mush on, mush!" and with a yelp the dogs galloped away, as if aware of the urgency of their mission.



"Haw, Leader!" was heard, as they turned the corner, and then they were gone.

"There goes the best dog-team in Alaska, and driven by the best two men on earth!" exclaimed a man as he re-entered the house.

The trail was easily followed, and soon the nine miles of level bench were passed. The speed slackened only when they were ascending the summit, which they reached by eleven that morning, and there it was seen that the sharp peaks were curling fine snow high in the air.

"They are beginning to smoke!" remarked one of the men.

"Yes, and we must get back here before night, or it's all off!" replied the other.

Down, down the steep descent they plunged, and by one o'clock they were off the glacier and skipping over level ground. The poor woman had pulled the sled until she had become exhausted and had sat down beside her husband. She was weeping bitterly when a noise startled her, and listening, she plainly heard the yell of a driver and the barking of dogs. With tears dimming her eyes she discovered them rapidly approaching, and as the team galloped in a circle and stopped beside her with the dogs' heads pointed back towards the glacier, she clapped her hands with joy, for they had come to her rescue!

The dogs lay down, and with their lolling tongues lapped the snow, while the drivers ate some crack-

ers and jokingly encouraged the sick man and helpless woman. She was bidden to seat herself comfortably, while they fastened the two sleds together. Soon they were bounding away at such a rapid rate of speed, that the woman again wept, but for joy. When they recrossed the summit the whole range was "smoking" and the wind was sending the fine snow along the crust. It whipped their faces with a warning of what was coming; but the driver said:

"Twenty miles to town and it can never catch us!"

Townsmen anxiously waited and looked up the trail, and many exclaimed, "They can't possibly be here before midnight," but they were. As they rushed up to the crowd with a yell, and a glad bark from the noble dogs, they were surrounded by eager, helping hands. The dogs acted as if they understood why they were being petted so. Again the woman wept for joy. Yes, they were saved—not by men of good intentions only, but by men of instant action.

The rescued are now living at Valdez. The snow disappeared, the scurvyites recovered, flowers bloomed, birds sang and the nights rapidly dissolved into continuous daylight. I was eager to explore where,

"Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,  
The waters are sparkling in grove and glen."

I had informed a military officer of my intention to make an attempt to find Captain West's placers,

and he had asked me to accept a proposition of acting as government scout which I accepted. That would take me right into the mountains, and while looking for passes through them, I could also keep my eye out for the location of the West discovery.

Fortunately, I had told him only about that part of the story West had told his men regarding its location on the headwaters of the Tanana, and had retained my own opinion about the gold really being on the headwaters of the Chistochina.

How I chafed to get away, but could not. I was retained as guide on the trail, while others were sent towards the headwaters of the Tanana. Oscar Rohn, the geologist, went into the Tanana, and Cooper, a former friend of that military officer, also left Copper Center with horses he had wintered inside; he was breaking strings to get on to the headwaters of the Tanana. There I was, without a horse, or the possibility of getting one, and compelled to play a waiting game while others wore themselves out nibbling at the West bait.

True, I should have arranged to have gone in on my own account, and over the snow in the spring, but it was now too late. I was compelled to content myself with blazing the trail along the precipitous walls of Keystone Canyon; there watching the silvery threads of water falling for five hundred feet or more, and spreading their spray in beautiful rainbows.



*Keystone Canyon.*





Surely no route exists that excels in grandeur the scenery between Valdez and the Yukon. It is a treat to the lover of sublimity, to hie away to the recesses of those coast mountains, on a warm, sunny day, and drink from the cool streams of the nectar "fit for the gods." Precipices, extending upwards to dizzy and astonishing heights, where the eaglet is taught his first lesson, loom up before one, who vainly endeavors to comprehend the immensity of the surroundings. One cannot realize that the plainly seen volcanic smoke from Mt. Wrangell is probably one hundred miles away; nor that the waterfalls near by, that pour over bluffs with a continuous roar, are fed by melting snows and glaciers, thousands of feet above and miles beyond. This Coast Range is one vast collection of waterfalls, that roar you to sleep, then awaken you to make you feast your eyes on their spreading spray. Speechless with admiration you stand and gaze at the beautiful and variegated colors of their rainbows.

## CHAPTER XII

*An Indian said: "Indian shoot black bear, bear die; Indian shoot glacier bear, may-be-so bear die; Indian shoot grizzly bear, Indian die."*

ON May 8, I camped with Amy, Louvrous, Finch, Fish, Fitch, and others, who were sledding their outfits over the divide. A little black bear came right into camp and I missed a butt-of-an-ear shot at no greater distance than 30 paces. I was shooting a Winchester cartridge with smokeless powder and a solid bullet from a Frontier revolver, and was confident of being able to hit a silver dollar at that distance. As the shot was fired, he lowered his head, and then bounded away as a second bullet cut the bark of a tree behind him. I did not expect forgiveness from those men for that careless sort of shooting and deserved the ridicule received for it.

One whole day was spent in crossing the divide, as the snow was soft and deep, and at night I threw my sleeping-bag down on some boughs on eight feet of snow, among the trees of the Tekeil River bottom. There were hundreds of ptarmigan cackling around camp the next morning, and it was amusing to hear them say, "O, come back! Come back!" Soon I had killed ten of them and we spent the whole of that

day resting and eating ptarmigan stew. I explored to the source of that river, to determine if it were possible to construct a trail through by way of Tonsina Lake. While up there, I shot a mountain goat that was wearing a very heavy coat of mohair. Those goats of the Coast Range are very large, but this one was so emaciated it could not be eaten; and because of their poor condition I refrained from shooting others on this trip. The old Alaska goats keep right in the fashion of their civilized brothers by wearing whiskers on their chin.

I returned to Dutch Flat and found that one of the Drase brothers had killed the little black bear which I had missed a few days before. This Dutch Flat ends in the upper gorge of Keystone Canyon, which is about three miles from end to end. Lieutenant Brookfield, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Flemmings, and another man whose name is now forgotten, attempted, in the spring of 1898, to float through that box canyon on a raft. They had climbed over the mountain and had descended into this place. They were tired and hungry, and, rather than spend a day or two in climbing back to get out, they decided to go through the canyon in a few minutes.

At that time this canyon never had been explored to their knowledge, and for all they knew, they might be hurled over falls that were anywhere from five to five hundred feet high; so under those circumstances

it was one of the most foolish escapades ever undertaken by men of sane minds. They built a raft of logs and willow withes; then each man armed himself with a pole, and as they shoved the raft out in the mad stream they waved their hats at nobody and yelled, "Vive Cuba Libre!" Above the sound of that mad rushing water and those madder human adventurers, the mountain echoed Alaska's greeting to the southern isle.

At the entrance of the canyon, the water piles up against a perpendicular wall, then turns squarely to the left. It was there that the voyagers were introduced to the magnitude of their undertaking. The lieutenant commanded: "Present poles!" and they did so, in a brave but futile attempt either to prevent the raft, with thousands of tons of water driving behind, from striking the rock, or to push aside that five-hundred-foot wall, buttressed with a mountain.

They and the wall met squarely; the raft dodged the problem of the irresistible missile meeting the immovable object, and continued down stream, while five men were held out in the air on the ends of their poles for a second. Then five hats were to be seen floating on the surface of the water, but not a man was visible. Ten more seconds and the men were swimming for the raft, far below the place of the first disaster. One climbed up on it, just as it was about to turn turtle, and then the raft was on top of the man. Another moment, and two men were on



the raft, but the others were attempting to climb on, while it was approaching another rock wall. The man in the water below the raft had his chin resting on board in such a manner that when the raft struck the rock he would be decapitated.

One benevolent fellow, taking in the situation, did not care for the ghastly scene of having a head on board without a body attached to it, and thinking it would be preferable to the struggling mortal to drown rather than to have his head chopped off with a dull raft, he reached forth, took hold of the man's hair and, shoving him beneath, the raft glided over. The raft struck the wall, whirled and passed on, while a nearly drowned man was attempting to climb on to the rear end. Another half-minute and instead of a raft there were five separate logs with a man clinging to each one of them. They managed to find small landings, and all got out on one side, except Gardner, who crawled out on the east shore.

There were several small ravines cutting down into the canyon, and up those, by clinging to alder brush, the swimmers could climb out of the river, so they took to the mountain's sides. The remainder of the day was spent in clinging to rocky steeps, while the enraged, serpent-like river went winding and crawling beneath. Gardner, who came out of the canyon on the wrong side of the river, swam across that night. The next day they all arrived in Valdez, hatless, coatless and half starved. A year later,



"Tex" and Schelly attempted to go through the same canyon on a raft, but with similar results.

On July 8 I climbed to the top of a mountain, about 5000 feet above Dutch Flat, and there witnessed a most glorious sunrise. The fog came rolling in from the bay and ascended the canyons until there were only a few peaks left above it, like islands in a moving sea. To those in camp, far below, this was a dense cloud high above them; to me, it was an ocean, probably a thousand feet below. It rolled along and met a similar sea of fog which had ascended the Copper River, and poured through Thompson Pass into the Tekeil country. It appeared but a mile or two across that sea of vapor to the opposite side; yet it was about as reasonable to think that one could boat across such an arm of the sea, as to believe that four thousand feet below was a valley with spruce forests, where one hundred men and as many horses were building a trail for Uncle Sam. The sun shone warmly up there, while those below were obscured from its rays.

I descended into that vapor, where distances and objects appear very deceptive. When near the lower edge of it, I discovered what I took to be a mountain sheep, standing on a rock. The distance to the object appeared to be about seventy yards. I decided to shoot it in the sticking place, as hunters call a certain part of the neck, when suddenly the thing stood up on its hind legs!

"How stupid to think that a bear was a sheep!" I said to myself.

The aim was changed to the end of its nose, because the smokeless powder would send a bullet to its brain and avoid argument. Away went the bullet and over turned the supposed bear. I thought that he would roll down on about an acre of snow which appeared to be just below there. Imagine my surprise when I approached and found that instead of the acre of snow it comprised about thirty acres, and was half a mile away; and moreover, that the bear was only a whistling marmot (hedgehog) which weighed about fifteen pounds!

Once four soldiers were on the Valdez glacier when the atmospherical conditions were similar to those just related. They were extra good shots, all of them. They discovered what they supposed to be a bear, and with their army rifles, fired several shots without disturbing him. They decided, then, that he was too far away, so they raised their sights to six hundred yards and fired some more, with like effect. One decided to approach nearer, but he had walked only a few steps when he stopped, looked a while, lowered his sights and deliberately killed what proved to be a marmot, only about forty-five steps from them.

If you should see a snow bird on the glacier at such a time, you would think probably that it was a goose.

On one occasion when in a fog of high altitudes, and when the atmosphere was in a magnifying mood, I ran almost plump against a huge grizzly. I will not now tell of his hugeness, but will wait a few more years until my nerves are sufficiently relaxed, and then I will pick my subject—one who is physically strong enough to bear up under the load, after he has been given ample time to brace himself; and I will tell it to him by installments, too, for it would be unreasonable to expect any one to take on the whole cargo at once.

A few days after that mountain climb I assisted a few prospectors across a glacier stream, and Mr. Fowler, a gentleman from Missouri, attempted to ride behind me on a bucking mustang. He expressed more confidence in his horsemanship before he mounted than afterwards. That cayuse began immediately to take exercise. He bucked over boulders and into the stream, where we all disappeared from view in deep water. The horse lost his buck and a passenger while beneath that water. I discovered Mr. Fowler's pistol-pocket floating above the surface, and as that was all of his ship that was in sight, I attempted to run the horse down there and pull him ashore, but presently he floated to shallow water and then crawled out—cold, hatless and unhurt.

Dorsey Leavell was my companion for a month while we chased, abused, packed and repacked two

of the worst mustangs that ever came into Uncle Sam's possession. They never lost an opportunity to buck off a pack, to run four or five miles when hobbled, or to kick at us. At one place, when we turned them out to graze, they swam across a river and gave us "the horse laugh." We were two days in regaining possession of them. We taught one of those equines to be fast by anchoring him to a mountain. It was necessary to do that to get a pack on him. When the blind was raised, he very rudely and incautiously placed his two hind feet against my "dinner pail," just below the belt.

We met Mr. Dunham at Dutch Flat and he expressed sympathy for us because of our prospective exposure to dangerous rivers. He added that there was enough water between there and Valdez for him, and the distance was only twenty miles. Poor man! He was drowned before he arrived, and in sight of the town.

On the divide several bears were seen while we were scouting for a trail location, and one little black fellow insisted on boarding with us when we were absent or asleep. Once, when chased out of our camp by my little dog Pete, he became so attached to our pot of beans that he took it with him, and never even returned the pot. Mr. Leavell is my witness to that remarkable statement. We concluded that in getting away, he had run his nose under the bail, and as he ran up a very steep hill, he did not



lower his nose and let the pot drop, until he was too far away for us to find it.

Once, when going to the creek to wash for breakfast, I met that dishonest Bruin. We were just twelve steps apart; I in shirt sleeves, bareheaded and unarmed, while he was wearing a beautiful coat and a grin that seemed to say:

"I haven't your pot."

At that minute he could have had a foot-race, for I felt very much like giving a free exhibition of my sprinting powers, but only refrained because of his apparent good nature. If I had run through camp with that bear a close second, Leavell might have upset the coffee pot in his eagerness to join the contest. The bear slowly turned and crossed the creek, whereupon I became very brave, returned to camp, got my revolver and followed, only to fall into a foot of cold water, which chilled my enthusiasm. I returned to breakfast in a condition that seemed to amuse my companion very much.

One night a Swede camped near us, and we cautioned him about the little bear that was liable to come right into his camp and help himself. When we awakened the man the next morning, he had a gun, an ax and a hatchet in bed with him. We laughingly told him that a club was all he needed to run that little black cub away, but he replied:

"May-be-so his moder, and may-be-so his grand-moder come aroundt!"



All one day we crawled through the brush in the rain, and when we returned to camp we were tired, wet and hungry; then we discovered that Bruin had destroyed every edible thing in camp. He had scattered flour over an acre of ground, covered himself with it and glory, and us with despondency. Dorsey was a young man, only a boy out for experience, and as this was a larger chunk than is usually found, he sat down on a log to absorb it. While it rained, and his thoughts drifted back home, he exclaimed:

“I have found fault with trivial things at home, such as the absence of my favorite pie from the dinner-table, but if ever I get back, hang me if I find fault with anything as long as I live!”

What a valuable lesson it is, for one to be placed where he has real cause to complain, and knows that it would not help matters. How ridiculous it appears to one who has been inured to the hardships, privations and mishaps of the frontier, when returning to civilization, to see people worrying about houseflies or a little mud, or complaining of food that really is too good for them. It is natural for human beings to have trouble, and when they have none of their own, they try to borrow some. If that is impossible they will imagine they have trouble, anyway.

I once camped in a lonely place, in a grove of timber, and did not know there was another person on that river. The twilight was warm and balmy, just

the kind to suggest an evening's smoke. Suddenly I was surprised by the sweet strains of a piccolo that emanated apparently from the solitude. Investigation disclosed Harry King, sitting on a log, near by, and filling the surrounding wilderness with melodious music. I shot him with a kodak.

We met an unlucky crowd of prospectors who had lost their outfits in a destructive forest fire, and some others who were going out because of the scurvy. One tired man sat down, wiped the sweat from his brow and remarked:

"That was a singular incident about a steamboat coming so far out on the Valdez mud flats that it is a total loss!"

"Where did you hear that?" we asked.

"Mr. Garrett at the rapids told us about it."

Garrett had been stationed at the rapids with instructions to feed all needy prospectors on their way out. Everybody we met, after that, was overflowing with startling happenings, such as: that the American fleet at Manila had been captured by the natives swimming out to it; that the cannery at Orca had been blown up; and that Captain Abercrombie had been taken out to be treated for insanity. When asked who gave them the news, they always replied:

"Mr. Garrett, at the rapids."

Their actions and looks seemed to say, "It makes no difference *who* gave us the information, when it is true."

We arrived at the rapids in August, and held a private consultation with that original "Huck Finn," from Missouri. When asked why he insisted on filling up the pilgrims with such doses of prevarication, his answer was:

"You see, I am sent in here to relieve suffering, and those fellows come to me suffering for news. They just beg for it, although they should know that I have been in here all summer, with no chance of procuring a good article of fresh news for myself; but they insist, so I am compelled to do the best I can, even if I do improvise a little. I tell you, it just keeps me awake at nights, trying to think of news to tell the next crowd that comes along."

One fellow came along who played a practical joke on Garrett, and he succeeded so well that Garrett induced him to forego unwrapping his sleeping-bag, but to sleep in one of Garrett's bunks. When the man was asleep, Garrett unrolled the sleeping-bag and placed a four-pound rock in it; then rolled it up again. The next day the joker carried that extra weight for twenty miles, and when he unrolled his bed and found the rock, he wanted to return and kill Garrett, but he had no ammunition.

I camped near the point where Schrader and Miller were once slowly working their way through the alder brush, when they observed a bear looking down at them, from the mountain-side. They noticed the bear slap her cubs, then run towards them, but

thought nothing of it until the bear rose up within a few feet of them, and said "Wough!" Miller replied by saying "Wough, Wough!" and discharged his rifle in the bear's direction. The bear surprised Schrader by falling dead. Schrader declared that Miller did not raise his gun to his shoulder, but that after the bear was dead he fired several shots at the body and missed every time.

It is not probable that it was such an accident as they pretend, for Miller is a person of quick decision, and just the kind of a man to kill a bear before some men would have made up their minds what to do.

Miller discovered the noted Miller gulch, about a year later, and fortune could not have bestowed her favors on a more deserving man. I will here state that my companion, Mr. Leavell, also struck it rich by locating a good placer claim, the following year. He returned home and married. James Garrett also found rich pay gravel, but he looked on his fortune as a practical joke that the devil or some one had played on him. Recently he lost his life in a bibulous effort to break even.

It was the latter part of August before I could depart on the exploring trip into the Alaskan Range. It was entirely too late for me to be able to reach the headwaters of the Tanana, by any possibility if I had so desired, but I might reach the head of the Chistochina. I bade my companion farewell and







*A Lake Scene.*

crossed Quartz Creek divide, near where the fall before Jack Miller, Charley Simonstad, Joe Bell, Nelson, Jacobsen and Faber had been caught in a snow storm. They had found the carcass of a dead government mule which had wandered to that place, and they claim that the Thanksgiving dinner they enjoyed of mule meat will always be remembered.

I descended to the Tonsina Lake, that nestled quietly between high mountains. Its surface was almost constantly disturbed by the lashing of the salmon, and the flips of the trout. The outlet was crossed by swimming our horses, and camp was made near some Indians. A few days before, Frank Lavigne had been drowned at that place. I camped the next night on the divide between this and Klutena Lake, where I caught a fine mess of trout from Twin Lakes. A solar observation indicated  $61^{\circ} 45' N$ .

## CHAPTER XIII

*An Indian never thinks of yesterday and consequently has no history. One reasoned thus: "Yesterday dead! Tomorrow may-be-so Indian die!"*

THERE is a story current of a white man's adventure with some bears in that country. His camp was on one side of the river, and on the opposite shore was an Indian camp. Being without provisions, he desired very much to cross the river, but as the Indian camp was back some distance from the water, and hidden among the trees, he could not signal to them his wants. He waited for two days, hoping that an Indian would come in sight, so that he could make him understand that he wanted a canoe brought over for him.

In the afternoon two bears deliberately walked into his camp, and as they approached from behind, they were very near to him before he saw them. Immediately he plunged off the bank into the river, and apparently never looked back, but swam, then waded, then swam some more, and finally reached the opposite shore. The Indians received and fed him from the best that they possessed. Presently another white man came along, and after the half-drowned one had related his experience, the newcomer replied with astonishment:

"Why, man! You might have been drowned!"

The Indian here inserted:

"Drowned! Ha-low! He no drown! He see too many bear! He no drown!"

I met Mr. Wood and Mr. Rice at Copper Center on their return from the Yukon. Wood had been treed by a bear, and Rice complained that a pair of canvas leggins, which he had purchased at Valdez, had worn out the first time he had put them on. Wood claimed, however, that Rice had not taken them off while on the trip.

A severe earthquake was felt while we were there, and an Indian said if it shook any more he would go to Knik and consult a priest about it. There also I met old Chief Stickman, and he told me how he had offered a bear skin, two marten skins and a dog for a red-headed white woman whom he had seen there the previous summer. Her husband had agreed to the trade, but when the Chief brought out the articles, the white man looked at his wife for some time, and then backed down. Poor Stickman! He said if he had only had another bear skin he could have procured the red-headed white woman he had coveted. He had two wives already, but that Indian was ambitious. He wanted a variety in color as well as in numbers.

Mr. Date, whom I had engaged as assistant scout, overtook me at the Tazlina River. We were a day rafting our outfit over, and swimming the horses

across that deep and rapid stream. After we had crossed we camped with a crowd of Gulkana Indians. They were a happy lot, and sang and danced nearly all night. They explained that one of their guttural chants was a funeral dirge; another a marriage song, and another a religious melody or psalm. They said that seventy of their tribe had starved to death the previous winter. The stories that they told greatly amused them, and they made much over a star which they had not seen for a long time. Pointing to the north star, they explained it thus:

"He all time set down. He ha-low klatewah!" meaning that it was stationary.

Our trip through the Copper River country was made up of crossing numerous rivers, swimming horses, climbing table-bluffs and wallowing through swamps. The September weather was delightful. The mosquitoes had gone, the sun shone brightly through the clear atmosphere and we were in the center of the most beautiful landscape imaginable. During the short Indian summer there appear pretty golden-hued patches among the green. The sere brown leaves dip and flit to the music of the soft autumn zephyrs. Down they come, fluttering from the birch, the cottonwood and the quaking asp.

It is then that the magpie caws a laughing farewell to the northern summer and the red-winged black-bird gathers his wife and children from the swamps. They sing praises of their summer home, and grow



eloquent upon the prospect of a southern journey. The pheasant cock, with ruffled neck and spreading tail, struts across the trail and disappears in the undergrowth. The spruce hen flutters as if going to fly, then hesitates and looks the traveler out of countenance. The little red squirrel barks rather defiantly when you approach too near his granary of winter supplies. Above the timber, on the mountain-side, the ptarmigan fly in great flocks. It is then that we enjoy the clear, azure sky, cool nights, and warm, sunny days

We left the Copper River near the mouth of the Sanford—as it was advisable to travel over unexplored ground to gather information for the Copper River Exploring Expedition—and struck across the country for the headwaters of the Chistochina River. The original name of this river is Cristochina (Holy tea water river). The word “Christ” was given to the Indians by the Russian missionaries; “to” is the Indian word for water; “chi” is another Russian word and is tea in English; and “na” is the Indian word for river. All river names ending with “na” should be compound words such as Shiti-na (Copper River) and Tana-na (Trail River). Chiti-to means Copper-Water.

We followed the signs that had been left here and there by the Indian, Gokona Charley and his family, as they had migrated that way to the mountains on their fall hunt. We traveled past muskrat-popu-

lated lakes, and near one of those lakes I killed a coot duck which was flying overhead. My companion expressed surprise at that revolver shot, and I was just as much astonished myself, but it was discretion to say less about it. A coot duck is a large black fellow that can be eaten if the coot is first boiled out of him; but there would be very little duck left, after that was done.

The Alaskan Range is Alaska's backbone, and includes the highest mountain in North America—Mount McKinley—and it ends with the vertebra of the Wrangell group, including the mountains St. Elias and Logan, each about 20,000 feet high, and many others that are more than 16,000 feet above the sea-level. Mountain climbers may be assured, if they really enjoy scaling such heights, they will find in that region the monumental culmination of their desires; but the ordinary mortal can hardly contemplate such immense surroundings without experiencing a sense of weariness.

We arrived at the foothills of the range, and, after scaring a moose from a pasture of high grass, our horses took possession for their night's feed. The salubrious climate that we had enjoyed, left us at Chisna Creek and we were in wintry weather. A few men had located placer claims there before the weather would prevent them from recrossing the Coast Range. I located a claim myself, in a snow-covered gully, and that locality proved to be such a



*Among the Mountains of the Alaskan Range.*



poverty-stricken one that it was afterwards known as Powell's gulch.

The bushy-headed Indian, known as Gokona Charley, came into our camp, and said that his family was then camped on the Slahna River. He declared that he could pan gravel with as good results as any experienced miner. We fed and sheltered him over night, and gave him ten pounds of flour because he had told us that his little boy was very sick. We learned the next year that when Charley returned to his camp he had found his wife wailing over the dead body of their child.

Before leaving, he had insisted that I should locate a claim on a small gulch, about eight miles from the point where we were camped. He said I should have to go through a pass, that there was "hiyu" gold there, and that others would surely find it the next year. The poor fellow was trying to repay me for my hospitality. Believing that the pass he mentioned might be of advantage to the military expedition in running a trail through the Alaskan Range, and also that the Captain West discoveries were in that locality, I attempted to find the gulch he described. The winter had set in with a vengeance in those high mountains, and I had no shoes, my feet being wrapped in sacks. The outlook was very gloomy to us, as our chances of getting through the valley and across the three divides of the Coast Range, where there was no trail, were not very



pleasant to consider, together with the fact that we were almost out of supplies.

Just before the autumn day had closed I stood in the pass, after a weary day's march, and looked across to a white mountain-side and probably towards the long-sought locality. It would be impossible to go down into the deep canyon and climb out of it, for the snow was too deep to admit of such an undertaking; and besides, one would have necessarily to tramp all night to keep warm. The water was frozen, so no gravel could be washed. While I stood there, with the snowflakes whipping my face, they seemed to say: "Your life is at stake for the greed of gold! Is it worth while?"

Somewhere over yonder, a mile or two away, and now covered from the sight of man, was the sought-for treasure of the wild, but the doors of Nature's vaults had been closed against me. My friends can testify that my credit always has been limited, and I know it always will be so, yet I confess that the realization I was weighing my life in the balance with the gold that is worshiped by fools, made my estimate of that filthy lucre gradually sink below par.

As I slowly and wearily wended my way back, by the light of the snow, I reflected that if Apollo had been a prospector instead of a sheep-herder, and his scene of activity had been Alaska, he would have sung, no doubt, of the beauties of nature, because he usually did, but that very often his refrain

would have been varied by the favorite recitative of the country: "Please pass the beans."

I have always thought that the love of money was base, and a bar against a higher life, yet I doggedly resolved to return the next year and continue my search. If I had been allowed to leave the coast a month or even ten days earlier, I should have had my choice of locations on Miller Gulch and Slate Creek, which have, at this writing, produced about two tons of gold.

It is a consolation to know, however, that the locality was staked by more deserving men than some others who would have beaten Captain West and myself out of it, and who could not travel a straight trail unless there was an impassable barrier on either side.

The snow continued to fall, and the next day we prepared to leave. The air was calm and everything was purely white. That is when the ptarmigan come down off the mountain and say laughingly:

"I've come back!"

They descend singly and in flocks. A flutter and a sail, a flip and a cackle, and there is a ptarmigan down, and laughing about it! You cannot see him because he is as white as the snow. If you had found him two or three weeks before, his color would have been brown, but the first snow has remained on the mountain where he has been, and now he is white. At this time of the year, on a few of them, may be

noticed a dark-brown spot about the size of a silver dollar, but even that will be white in a few days.

On our return I went out to kill a few of them to eat. One came down, not twenty steps away, and thinking I saw the brown spot, I fired, only to knock the snow off a rock. The bird was two feet to one side and had no brown spot. He fluttered up and came down again. They have a red ring around the eyes, and looking for that I approached until it was visible, and then I killed the bird. The snow is not nearly so white in the spring, and after it has lain on the ground all winter those birds are seen much more easily. It is difficult to distinguish a white ptarmigan on an October snow, even at the distance of twenty steps.

They have fine feathers, a kind of hairy down, completely covering their feet, and their plumage changes color almost constantly. The small rock ptarmigan is very gentle, and often a hen will fight to protect her little chicks. They are frequently found, in summer, hovering over their broods in the rain. This presents a pretty picture. The chicks peep from their mother's feathers, while the hen is so gentle that you can almost stroke her back with your hand. My little dog Pete was trained to treat the hens and little chicks with respect.

We left that camp on September 28, and the distance to the coast, over the route we were compelled to travel, without a trail, was about three

hundred miles. The white Coast Range, with its three divides to cross, looked very forbidding and hopeless to us, who were almost out of food, and with feet wrapped in sacks. We fed all of our flour to the horses to enable them to get down to the valley, where they could live. So long as they had sufficient strength to carry our blankets, we felt secure, for we were too weak to carry them ourselves. We managed to kill a spruce hen or a pheasant almost every day, but game was very scarce at that time along the river.

If the weather had been delightful when we came up, it was very different now, for the cold north winds blew down the Copper River valley and through the naked tree tops. With a suggestive whistle, and apparently irresistible force, but with futile effect, they hurled themselves against those great natural battlements, the Wrangell group. The atmosphere was so clear, it was reasonable to believe that those mountains could be seen at a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. Mt. Wrangell sent up a steady spiral of smoke and steam that drifted away as clouds towards the Pacific.

When we were sitting by our campfire, one evening, with nothing to eat, two Indians approached us and asked if we had "muck-muck" (food)? Upon receiving a negative answer, they counted the number of nights that they should be away from their winter camp, and then "pot-latched" (gave)



us two dried salmon. These salmon are cured without salt, and white men can eat the half-rotten fish only when nearly starved; therefore, our condition may be inferred, from the fact that we ate and enjoyed those fish.

At one camp we supped on snowballs, and breakfasted on wind-pudding and ice-water. When we arrived at Copper Center, we had eaten but one pheasant during the previous thirty-six hours. We found Dick Wortham there, running a trading-post for Mr. Holman, for the purpose of securing furs from the Indians. He had laid in a supply of moose meat for the winter, and we sat down to the table and ordered the best he had. He placed a large pot of boiled meat before us and said:

"Boys, I put fourteen pounds of moose meat in that pot!"

We ate, and then rested, and began to eat again, and he exclaimed:

"Boys, I put fourteen pounds of moose meat in that pot!"

Before retiring, we attacked that pot again and succeeded in eating all that there was, so Dick settled back once more, and exclaimed:

"Boys, I put fourteen pounds of moose meat in that pot!"

He charged us nine dollars for that meat and other sundries, and we had to raise the price of our worthless placer locations a few thousands to pay



the bill. I met Dick, nearly a year after that incident, and in answer to my salutation he exclaimed:

"Honest to God, I put fourteen pounds of moose meat in that pot!"

A few Indians visited that post, from a near-by village, and among them was a little girl with the pretty name of Natalia. I inquired diligently why they had named the child "Natalia," but no one seemed to know; and it was a striking illustration of their unconscious absorption of influence from far-away Russian, for Natalia was the name of the mother of Peter the Great, Russia's most practical ruler.

From Copper Center it was a battle with the elements. Our food was insufficient and we had no trail to follow. We met Mr. Holman and his assistants, who were burdened with the first mail from Valdez to the Yukon, and he richly deserves the credit of delivering it under the conditions that then existed.

Our warm and dry sleeping-bags enabled us to sleep comfortably beneath two feet of snow, on the Grayling Creek divide, while the cold north wind blew, and the poor horses pawed the grass on the steep hillsides. One horse refused to move the next morning. I mercifully sent a bullet to his brain, and he dropped beside our trail. We crossed and descended to the edge of timber and camped on frozen ground.

We camped the next night in a deep valley that was brimful of death-like stillness, and surrounded

by gold and silver crimsoned peaks that had climbed heavenward to bask in the light of other planets. About one o'clock at night I was looking on one of the prettiest sights of a lifetime. We were in the shade of a deep canyon, but the full moon shone on the tops of the surrounding mountains, thousands of feet above us and miles away; and those refulgent rays lighted up the canyons and deep-cut gorges so plainly that we could see the great precipices and glaciers, away up where human feet never could tread. That color overspread everything with a rich golden glow, unimaginable to those who never have viewed a northern winter's moonlight. For one hour I had been absorbed in speechless wonder, when my companion called out:

"Say, you sleepy-head, wake up and look at the grandest scene that Nature ever painted! I have been staring at it for an hour!"

There! Both of us had been gazing on the scene and neither of us had said a word—and with empty stomachs, too! True, Alaska's hardships are severe, but she often repays one with that which "filthy lucre" cannot buy. Ambidextrous Alaska! She affectionately strokes your brow with one hand and wrathfully cuffs you with the other! She woos you with a smile and drives you away with a frown.

We trudged wearily into U. S. Station No. 3, where we were fed. As the wind was blowing fiercely across Thompson Pass, we deferred the crossing until

night. We then made the attempt, but the horse, "Dynamite Bob," lost his buck and life up there. Although on the summit, he refused to move farther, and so we left him and sought shelter in the lee of a large rock on the Coast side of the mountain. The next morning I returned far enough to see his feet sticking out of the drifting snow.

I will frankly admit now that I should rather part with my dollar watch than undergo the hardships of such another trip. The next morning we slowly descended into the timbered lowlands, out of the wind, and tried to realize that we had but twenty miles to trudge to the little town at the end of the land-locked bay. Ah, how much that destination meant to us. It meant bacon and good old beans, butter and bread and possibly beefsteak! Our ambitious spirits gradually left our ankles and began ascending towards our knees, as we prefigured the luxury of reading letters from home while enjoying comfortable shelter from the cold, bitter storms.

When we did weakly walk into Valdez, we were long-haired, long-whiskered, hatless, shoeless and horseless, and represented the remnant of the outfit that went exploring in the Alaskan Range, in the fall of 1899.

## CHAPTER XIV

*The boy described in this chapter was at the latter end of the firecracker stage of life, possibly twelve years old.*

IN 1898 every locality north of the 45th parallel was referred to as "the Klondike," although the Klondike was only a small river in the Northwest Territory. If you were going north your friends would insist that you were going to the Klondike, anyway, and by referring to you as a Klondiker they would coerce you into submission.

In 1900, it was Nome, Nome; no place like Nome. There were enough persons going to Nome to stake off a territory as large as New England, and all expected to secure desirable locations. If you succeeded in convincing others that you were going north and not to Nome, you also succeeded in impressing them with the belief that you were an imbecile. Prospectors went in pairs, one to hold the sack while the other shoveled gold into it. Hardships, the work of pulling sleds, would be unknown; just landing on the beach and shoveling up the gold! Where there was one gold-saving machine sold in 1898, dozens of them were sold in 1900.

One man refused to buy a machine, and in that respect he was a solitaire; but he further distin-



guished himself additionally by devising a scheme that would readily return him a fortune. He found that he could ship Nome sand down to Seattle as ballast; so he decided to do that, and wash it out in the winter at his leisure, or sell it.

Good-looking restaurant girls asked to be taken to Nome, and others volunteered the information that they could wait on tables, wash dishes, and almost anything else if only allowed to go to Nome. It is probable that a restaurant man could have secured a hundred women on those conditions.

A lone boy quietly boarded a ship and was living there so sumptuously that he was quite important. Why not? Was he not going to Nome to make his fortune? The steamer did not land at the Sitka wharf, but anchored out in the stream. The Captain managed nevertheless to put that boy on land. Later he went on shore himself, and there met the penniless boy from Alameda. The little fellow asked him if he did not think it heartless and cruel to put a boy off on such an island without a penny in his pockets to get something to eat.

The humane Captain's feelings were touched, as well as his pocket, and he gave the boy a dollar, requesting him to invest it in such a manner that he might, some day, hear what he had done with it. The boy solemnly promised and kept his word.

This is what he did with it: he gave half of the dollar to an Indian to row him out to the steamer



just as it was leaving. There he succeeded in climbing up the stern of the vessel and hanging like a spider from his web to a chance rope that happened to be there, while the Indian and his canoe were left in the boiling wake. In accordance with the good luck that always attends such daring boys, a passenger happened to look over the stern of the steamer and, seeing the boy, pulled him up on deck. He remained unobserved until well out at sea, then he went around and humiliated the Captain—in fact, knocked him speechless by lifting his cap in salutation.

The Captain looked at the boy, then rubbed his eyes and looked at him again. He said to himself, "Is it possible! Didn't I leave that boy at Sitka? And gave him a dollar at the last minute? It's the same boy, same freckles, same sunburn, same cap and the same coat with the hole in the elbow!"

The boy continued to humiliate the Captain by strutting past him again and again. He seemed to enjoy the Captain's embarrassment. Finally the Captain could no longer resist, so he called to the boy and they held a private conversation. The Captain felt as though he were talking to the president of the company, but he wanted to know several things. A boy who could so quietly board his ship was evidently developing traits of character that would, if cultivated, land him in the penitentiary—

or make a capitalist of him. The boy told of how he had left home, and how he had helped his mother wash the dishes the morning he stole away. He said:

"I told mother I was going to Nome, but she only laughed. She doesn't quite know me, yet. We haven't been acquainted long enough. I always mean what I say. I didn't have a cent of money—didn't have any when I landed at Sitka, for that matter."

There again he was tantalizing the Captain.

"What are you going to do?" asked the Captain.

"Go to Nome."

"But this boat doesn't go there."

"I will."

"I'll put you off at Valdez, and then what will you do?"

"Go to Nome."

"Boats running westward from Valdez only go to Dutch Harbor, so what will you do there?"

"Go to Nome."

"What shall I tell your mother when I return to California? that you——"

"Went to Nome."

"See here, what did you do with the dollar that I gave you?"

"I spent half of it."

"How?"

"I gave it to an Indian to bring me out to the ship."

"What! Persuaded the Captain to loan you money to get back on his boat?"

"Yes, and I'll go to Nome on the other half."

"And that is just what I'll tell your mother—that you went to Nome! Now go and see that you make yourself useful on board this ship."

It would be interesting to know what finally did become of that Nome-bound boy.

I came up from Sitka that spring, on the steamer *Bertha*, on which was a small man who had a large contract on his hands. He was going north to bring out some full-grown Kadiak grizzlies, sound in both body and mind. He asked me what kind of bait to use for his traps, and I suggested Siwashes, as I had heard they were particularly fond of those Indians. Because that fellow bragged about not being seasick, we dubbed him "The Sailor," but he threw up his reputation and other things when we struck a storm.

We were towing a little schooner which was bound for Latua Bay. All night long we wallowed in the troughs of the sea, and daylight surprised us by showing us the schooner still hanging to our line. When we arrived opposite Latua, the wind was not right for the schooner to enter, so the crew decided to try and hold on to our boat until we arrived at

Yakutat. Latua Bay is landlocked and is connected with the ocean by a very narrow strait through which the tide rushes with great velocity. It was discovered in 1786, by the French navigator, Pérouse, who lost several members of his crew while sounding the dangerous entrance.

The little boat followed at the end of a long line, while we were driven into mountains of water by a southern gale. At times, it was out of our sight while great waves rolled between, and at others it was on the crest of a ridge while we were on another, with that long line stretching across a watery canyon between us. Suddenly the rope parted and we left the schooner, watching it become smaller in the distance. Soon it was lost to view and to this world. It was reported later that the body of one of the sailors had been found on a beach nearly opposite where we had last seen them.

We were rocked up and down, to and fro, for fifty-two hours in a stormy sea. When our maternal ancestors rocked their babies in cradles until they were so sick that they vomited and too sick to cry, their care-takers wiped their little mouths, saying that it was a sign of healthy children and proceeded to sicken them some more. It is probable that a few of those who were most thoroughly rocked in childhood grew up to be sailors, and at some period of their lives the others wanted to be.

We came by way of Yakutat, where was a mis-



sion, a store and a postoffice. The Indians destroyed that mission so "there was not one log left upon another." The Indians came out to our vessel in canoes. They tied the first canoe to the steamer's ladder with a fishline, then others were tied to that one, and then to the others, until there was an acre of canoes jammed together, with Indians little and big, old and young, well dressed and otherwise, scrambling on board. They swarmed everywhere, even into our staterooms that were unlocked.

The best-looking squaws sold trinkets for the whole tribe. They would cooingly attempt to talk until we bought something, and then not notice us afterwards,—they were sophisticated to that extent. It reminded us of their civilized sisters at church fairs.

The whistle blew half an hour before leaving, and they immediately scrambled back into their canoes and raced to shore, while their dogs on land howled with pain or something.

When we landed at Valdez a man approached me and asked if I were a moose. I replied that I was a caribou. I told an acquaintance, who had wintered there, of the circumstance, and solicited his aid in placing the interrogator where he could do no harm, but this friend informed me that in my absence the old-timers had organized a society called the Alaska Moose. Now, as I had joined the Sons of Rest at Juneau, the Never Sweats at Sitka, and



the H. A. Society at Valdez, I felt that I had reached the limit of fraternal dignities.

I attended a church at Valdez, and listened to a moccasined musician pump modern music from a poor old asthmatic organ. He seemed to get more action out of his feet than with his hands, but as it was conceded that he was skilled in music we listened with admiration. He went after the poor defenseless organ as if he were determined to cause an earthquake, and really I feared that he would succeed. That music wept, sighed and moaned, then it cursed, raved and roared, while I held on to my nerves with difficulty and groaned. The audience was happy, not because it was music, but because it was difficult to do that. When he stopped to rest, I imagined that I could hear that organ panting.

I had seen a young man in Sitka, a mere amateur in music, take a cat and, by holding its paws so that it was defenseless, lay it on a table; then seizing its ear in his mouth, and with his other hand twisting its tail, he had in such a manner ground out just as good music, according to my judgment, as this professional had hydraulicked through that organ.

If there is a nerve extending from the medulla oblongata to the cortex of my skull, or that convolution of brain matter which indicates music, it must have been strained or bent at some time or other. I possess probably as much vocal music as a mud turtle, yet I enjoy emotional music, such as may be

produced by a senorita playing on a guitar, if she be passably good-looking; or a solo in a mix-up with Annie Laurie; but I draw the line on those uncontrollable medleys which pick you up with a sluice fork, break your neck with a Jiu-Jitsu twist, or jab you in the butt of the ear with a sudden stop, and then throw down the lines and allow the team to run over the bluff. If I were called in to tune a piano, I probably would use a stick of dynamite.

Like all frontier towns, many of the inhabitants of Valdez were known only by the "nick-names" which had become attached to them in some unknown manner. I was approached by a soldier who was enjoying a respite from Fort Liscum, and he inquired for the "Poor Man." I informed him that he was addressing the object of his search, but he refused to accept my view of the case, and explained that the "Poor Man" was a fellow who had once given a dance to procure sufficient money to furnish his house. The scheme had paid so handsomely that he had continued the dances twice a week for the rest of the winter, earning thereby the title of the "Poor Man."

An important day's doings at Valdez might have been recorded thus: "'Oklahoma Bill' told 'Shorty the Kid' that he had bought two dozen marten skins of 'McKinley George' for a dollar each, but when he had attempted to sell them to 'Cold and Greasy,' he had been informed that they were muskrat skins,



*Valdez, as we left it.*



worth a nickel apiece; and that 'Dad,' 'Alkali Ike' and 'Frenchy' had also declared them to be muskrat skins. 'Lucky Bill' had bought a bear skin from 'Bear Brown'; and 'Cockney Jim' had baked pies that even 'Alganik Bill' couldn't eat. 'Staghound Bill' had sold his dog-team to 'Big Rosa'; and 'Slop Jake' was sent to the penitentiary for shooting at and missing a man. 'Scottie' had abused 'Dynamite Dan' for going down the bay in 'Fertilizer Louis's' sloop; and 'Bald-headed Chris' had taken his squaw with him, because he had thought 'Red-headed Chris' was falling in love with her. 'Tenas Rosa' had drawn a sketch of 'Buck Hoyt'; and 'Dog-faced Joe' had called 'Windy Jim' and 'Joe Joe' contemptible perplexities for making remarks about 'Copper River Red's' long hair. 'Whiskey Jim' had been blown up in a mine, and 'Slow Water Willie' alias 'Swift Water Bill' was expected back from Fairbanks." Those were familiar names in Valdez.

Charley and Jack, two young Copper River Indians, had expressed a desire to come out to the coast and see the many astonishing sights that had been described to them by the white men. Older Indians cautioned them, fearing that the white soldiers would kill them, but upon being assured that there was no danger, they made the venture. They never had seen a cow or a hog, a wagon or a house, or even a white squaw. They called the beef-cattle



the "white man's caribou," and the mules, his "moose." Their first day's amusement was found in looking at those unfamiliar sights, and what a circus day it was to those children of the forest!

Charley retired to a bunk that had been assigned him when night came, as his tired brain needed rest; but Jack wandered to a social hall where a dance was being conducted. The wonderful sight of handsomely dressed women, gracefully swinging in the waltz, or dancing a two-step to the strains of the white man's music, caused him to exclaim:

"Charley must see the spirit dance of the white men and white squaws!" So away he ran for the bunk-house, and rushing up to the bedside of his companion, he began spitting out mouthfuls of Indian jargon, while he pulled and hauled at Charley. Being thus rudely awakened, and in his half-dazed condition, Charley readily partook of Jack's excitement. With one grand sweep, he threw his blanket covering across the room, and, dressed only in a very short shirt, made a wild break for the great "Council House." He had entirely forgotten his newly acquired clothing, and, in his excitement, he was not content to hesitate or merely thrust his bushy head through the doorway of the dance hall, but rushed right in, despite his nude condition, and sat down on a vacant seat. Possibly he might have been persuaded to retire unnoticed, if the musician had possessed sufficient control, but when he espied His

Naked Highness—the Indian—the violinist lost a note, then two, then three, and finally dropped his fiddle and roared with laughter.

Charley became disgusted because of the attention paid to him, and retired to the bunk-house, where it was explained to him that while a certain degree of nudity was proper for ladies, it was customary for men to enter a ballroom with a full-dress suit and other articles of apparel which evidently he did not possess.

The musician attempted to continue the same piece of music but it was a failure. When he arrived at the note he had been playing when he had discovered the nude Indian, he broke down. He says that to this day he never has been able to get over that note.

A few days were spent waiting for orders, but the time passed in the expectant day-dreaming of those unexplored wilds; of the game, flowers and wild berries that abound. In August and September, one often finds acres of wild currants, blueberries and salmon berries. The salmon or molina berry is most plentiful near the coast, where it grows extremely large. They are of two kinds—yellow and black. They grow also both the low and high-bush cranberry.

## CHAPTER XV

*I told an Indian boy that President Roosevelt was an expert hunter, and he replied: "Bring White Chief to Copper River and me show him how to snare rabbits."*

I STARTED in 1900 with one companion on a trip for the U. S. Copper River Exploring Expedition, and we were joined along the route by Dave Rhodes, who is a noted Yellowstone Park guide, August Chisholm, from California, William Soule, from Boston, and Ed. Dickey, from Nevada.

Mr. Dickey had been a prospector in about all the mining districts of the west, and he had so accustomed himself to adversity that he could fatten on it. He probably was the best-humored man in Alaska at that time. He led a foolish horse that, like some men, would get excited, and as he plunged in the mire Dickey would remonstrate, reason and plead with the animal to behave. Once the horse got the better of his instructor by dragging Dickey through a stretch of muddy water, but he did not complain. He just stroked the horse's neck and said:

"Baldy, you will compel me to speak harshly to you, and possibly use profane language, if you don't reform your ways!"

In one place I was compelled to turn my horse

loose, while we both plunged separately through the mire. After repeated plunges and rests, we reached solid footing. I remained near by to see if Dickey would not utter just one profane word to relieve his mind and my nerves; because his quiet behavior was exasperating. The circumstances justified profanity of the very best quality, and Dickey, it appeared to me, was neglecting his privilege. Millions of mosquitoes, all day, had done what they could to bring out his latent resources, but in vain. This last swamp, mud-wax or tapioca pudding, would surely awaken him to his duty. He succeeded in stopping his charger at the very edge of the mire and remarked:

"Baldy, I'm afraid you'll cause me to speak harshly to you!"

Dickey then cautiously approached until he was bogged down, and Baldy plunged over him; but as he did so, he knocked off Dickey's hat, and with his hind foot shoved it three feet beneath the surface. The horse plunged and rested, alternately, until he had gained *terra firma*. Dickey turned red in the face, while pulling one leg at a time from the mire. He crawled over to the place where he had seen his hat last, and running his arm down until he spat out dirty water, extracted the hat and stood up in a commanding attitude. Then I began to feel proud of him, for evidently he was going to say something, and I hoped it would do justice to himself and the occasion. Very likely the air around



would be of a bluish cast while Dickey made a record for himself. The swamp needed it, the horse needed it, and I, myself, needed a liberal amount, for not telling him to do some swearing before he entered the bottomless place. Now, it was going to come! Dickey looked at nothing but shaky swamp for miles around him, and then burst forth:

"Say, I've a notion to take up a ranch, right here!"

There I was—unarmed, but Dickey never will be forgiven for his calm behavior on that occasion. Alaska is a hard place on a man's religion, but surely it was unprepared to receive a man who couldn't swear at all. Mr. Dickey possessed other peculiarities, as the following incident goes to show:

An Irishman was left in charge of a station with instructions not to feed travelers or horses. Dickey rode up and applied for accommodations, because it was late at night and storming, and he could go no further. The Irishman said:

"Och, ye would be afther sthayin' all night, would ye? I've instructions to kape no wan, and so ye better be goin'."

Dickey hesitated.

"Ye can't be sthoppin' here, do ye understhand!"

Dickey rode under the shed, and tied his horse there, out of the wind. The Irishman threw some hay to his own horse, but none to Dickey's, although that was not necessary, for Dickey did that himself.



The Irishman remonstrated, but Dickey reasoned that the horse should eat something while he rested. Then Dickey followed the Irishman into the house and seated himself by the fire.

"There'll be none av the loikes av ye sthop-pin' here while I have suprame authority to prevint it!"

"That's all right," nonchalantly replied Dickey, "I'll warm myself by the fire a little, as it's very cold outside."

The Irishman sat down by the fire for twenty minutes, expecting Dickey to go, but he did not; then he went into the kitchen. Dickey heard dishes rattling in there, so he entered and discovered the Irishman quietly eating his supper.

Dickey bravely procured implements from the cupboard and deliberately sat down to eat. The Irishman was too astonished to talk, and after supper Dickey returned to enjoy his comfort by the fire. Presently, the Irishman came in and sat down for his evening smoke, but during the half-hour that passed he spoke not a word. Finally he walked back to his bed and retired for the night, still wondering when his strange visitor would depart.

Dickey coolly walked over to the bedside, remarked that there appeared to be room enough for two, dropped off his trousers and crawled in beside his host. Again the Irishman lost his speech, caused by a swelling that extended over his entire body and

paralyzed his vocal chords. When he recovered he said:

"By the howly Saint Patrick! Oi niver saw the loiks of ye! Mon, the bed is yours! The whole station and the harse belongs to ye! Take all av it, for I've nothin' to say; but sure now, if ye plase, just inform me whin me sarvices are not naded!"

My companion and I reluctantly parted company with the others at Copper Center, and when we arrived at the banks of the Tazlina River we found it a raging torrent. We rafted our outfit across, but the horses refused to enter the cold water, and I was compelled to ride one ahead while my companion drove the others in. It was a hard, long swim, and we drifted far down the stream, but finally gained the other shore.

We remained two days in camp at the mouth of the Gokona River, because of the excessive heat. When the weather is warm in Alaska, the humidity in the atmosphere is most enervating, yet one can have plenty of cold water to drink, and butter, if kept in the shade, retains its solidity. In that respect, it is different from the warm weather of the southern deserts, for there, the prospector carries butter in a bottle. The only relief for a thermometer's raging fever, down on the desert, is to apply wet cloths along its backbone. It was at the Gokona River camp that my companion was thrown beneath a vicious horse, by the breaking of a latigo. I held the horse by the

bit while he kicked wickedly at his rider's head, barely missing it, and while the man's foot clung to the stirrup in such a manner that he was being dragged to the ground. I called to him to lie low, and he replied:

"O, I'll never let another good thing pass by me, as long as I live!"

Again the horse's shoe barely missed his head, and he said:

"If I ever get out of this, *won't* I have a time?"

When he did get loose, he stood up and shouted:

"Gee whiz! You bet I'm going to have all the good things that come my way the rest of my life! Golly, what a time I'm going to have!"

There were about forty Indians near there, who were engaged in drying salmon for winter use. Among them were the two Gulkana Indians who had divided their salmon with Date and myself the fall before. Now had come the time to pay that debt, so I measured each one of them twenty cups of flour. They were pleased and repeated "Chinan" (thanks) and said I was a "hiyu good man."

My companion delighted in deceiving the Indians by playing jokes on them. He performed the trick of carelessly lighting a match and placing it in his trousers pocket for a moment, then taking it out and lighting his pipe with it. One of my Indian friends wanted to try the same trick, but I cautioned him. Another Indian stepped up and did light a

match, placing it in his pocket; whereupon he jumped high in the air and made a few remarks that seemed to amuse the others very much.

My companion allowed a large Indian to beat him at running and jumping, and then he ran a few steps and turned a handspring. The Indian had never seen that done before, but bravely took off his hat and attempted it. I was reading at the time, when my attention was attracted by a noise that sounded as if a log had fallen to the ground. Looking up, I saw the Indian lying flat on his back, with his mouth open.

It was demonstrated to the Indians that one could hold a coffee-pot filled with boiling water, on the flat of his hand. This can be done, if the pot be immediately released as soon as it stops boiling. As long as it boils, it takes cold air to the bottom. In consequence of one Indian attempting to perform that trick, there was some tall kicking, a scattering of boiling water, and also some very forcible remarks. I really feared that companion was going to get us into trouble.

The Indians requested us to take an Indian boy along as far as the Chistochina River, and we did so. He amused himself by killing ducks and muskrats in the small lakes that bordered the trail, and my dog Pete surprised him by bringing his game out of the water. Indian dogs or tame coyotes never do that.



Instead of making the attempt to get back to the head of the Chistochina on the snow, I had remained and accepted a position from the government to continue exploring in the Alaskan Range. By so mismanaging, I arrived at the mouth of Slate Creek just as others had finished staking it out. After looking over the ground, I decided that above Miller Gulch, a tributary of Slate Creek, was where Captain West had made his discovery. That is the exact place I had been attempting to reach the year before.

We cached most of our provisions in trees, near Lake Mancomen (beaver) and turned westward to explore for a pass from the north side of the Copper River valley to the Tanana. When in one high pass, we experienced an electric storm of an unusual kind. We were in the midst of a summer cloud at an altitude of 5000 feet. The lightning did not strike, but seemed to break all around us. The thunder did not clap, but ran around on a level, and broke, ripped and tore along the mountain-side, while electricity caused the manes of our horses to look frowzy and our finger-tips to ache. It would not have been surprising had our eyebrows been scorched. The storm appeared to be busily engaged in tearing up this vaporous coverlid, by shooting a few bolts lengthwise and then ripping them crosswise. I never shall forget that ripping, splitting and breaking atmosphere. If Franklin had been in such a place, he would have been surprised at the



short string needed for his kite. This phenomenal treat was only a few minutes in duration, but was worth the money.

Owing to the warm weather, and the consequent high water that boiled from beneath the Gokona glacier, we were unable to cross that river until July 21. On our side of the river was as luxuriant bunch-grass as could be found in any country, and as beautifully colored flowers as one could desire to look upon; while not two hundred yards from us was the glacier that extended for miles back among the mountains. We saw a bear eating willow buds on the moraine of that glacier.

We crossed the glacier stream, and ascended high rolling hills at the foot of the mountain range. From there, we looked down on the glacier and over the Copper River valley. It appeared to have been once an inland sea. The whole country around must have been uplifted and now streams were cross-cutting old channels where the rivers had been. Although we were fifteen miles away from timber and 1000 feet above it, we found a log of ebonized wood that had just been washed from a high gravelly bank. It had been burned brown by the smothered heat of time and had a charred surface on one side, with spruce bark on the other.

I cut that log in two pieces, with the intention of returning this same way and packing one of them out to the coast, but failed to come by that route.

Probably that log will be found at some future time with its chips and the cutting, and great comment will then be made upon the edged tools that evidently were used at some prehistoric time. I fancy that the sensational article thus written would favorably compare with the average canards that occasionally appear in the modern Sunday papers.

The many extinct craters in Alaska are an evidence of the great volcanic activity which existed there in ancient times. The then warm climate was made possible by the thinness of the earth's crust, but the heat escaped through these craters; the crust thickened, and possibly the sudden cooling caused great precipitation; this failed to melt in summer, and consequently congealed into ice. So followed the glacier period. That was the time when Alaska really was the ice-bound region which popular repute supposes it to be at this day. Now, the climate again is becoming warmer from the same old cause—internal heat. Springs that come from the ground in that part of Alaska do not freeze in winter. Rivers overflow and glaciers are rapidly receding, as the many old moraines indicate.

These great changes in the north are comparatively of recent date, only a few thousand years ago, —yesterday, to a geologist; for the rocks are still black from the effects of volcanic fires, and here is the charred wood.

Many times has this old planet been darkened

by volcanic ashes and smoke. In B. C. 45 the sun shone pale on southern Europe for a whole year. A. D. 536 little sunlight was seen for a whole year and two months (Georgius Dynast, p. 94).

In A. D. 567, "In the second year of the reign of Justinian II., there appeared a flame of fire in the heavens near the north pole, and remained there for a whole year; darkness was cast over the world from 3 o'clock till night, so that nothing could be seen; and something resembling dust and ashes fell down from the sky." (Abu'l Farag, p. 95.)

The history of Portugal claims that that country was without sunlight for two months in A. D. 934.

In A. D. 1547 the sun appeared in some parts of the planet for three days as if suffused with blood. On May 19, 1780, the settled portions of North America experienced darkness from 10:30 A. M. until midnight. The sea and the rivers were covered to the depth of four inches with a black, sooty scum. These conditions were surely caused, not by other planets, as we are too ready to assume, but by volcanic convulsions of this old earth of ours. From the standpoint of a lay mind it appears to me that meteors might have the same origin; that is, they might be shooting from our great Polar volcanic guns, and according to the natural law that everything which goes up must come down, they return to earth. We are not rubbing noses with other planets, and attracting from them pieces of their

wearing apparel; and if we were attracting meteors from other planets, the law of the Divine Purpose would be upset and we should be attracting the planets themselves. I do not know this, but I do know that scientists advance by way of a whole catalogue of mistakes—at least, such is history!

Then, too, that other theory that appears to me to be an axiom, concerning the rotation of the earth. We are confronted by the fact that if water be poured on a grindstone, or a sphere, while that sphere is being turned eastward, the centrifugal force will cause the water to travel westward. It appears to me not only reasonable but an axiomatic fact that the same law must exist throughout all creation. If so, it is a reasonable answer for the question: Why are the fisheries washing away on the Atlantic coast and the ocean's waters receding on the Pacific coast?

Captain Foxen beached his boat on the coast of California in 1832, and it now is far inland and above sea level. It also looks probable that the great Salt Lake is a pool of the ocean water that was left in a basin, and that this through evaporation is becoming more saline and will eventually disappear. If this theory should be true, then the rotation, with external attraction, does cause a circumvolution of the waters, and in a great cycle of time history will repeat itself regardless of local upheavals.

There are in California thousand of tons of sea-shells on the tops of high mountains, and in other



places there are bones of animals, sixty feet beneath the surface. This supports the theory that old ocean has rolled between the dry-land periods, and that gigantic mammals performed on the stage prior to the last circumvolution of the waters.

That does not, however, in any way disprove the fact that the earth's crust contracts and wrinkles, depresses and upheaves; for our old balloon will continue to do that until she becomes so near a solid that she drops in line as a secondary planet, a moon for some other planet, or else she will drop into the sun to furnish light and warmth to heavenly constellations. Neither does it conflict with the approaching theory that the earth possesses another rotation, which, in time, changes the locations of the poles.

If this theory of water movement be correct, then the complete circuit of the waters might cause a geological period, but the mind of man even then could not ascertain the chronology, as our history does not compose a unit, or one period. If this be true, the time will come when the Mississippi valley will be an inland sea, and Oceanica a vast continent.



## CHAPTER XVI

*A porcupine is not so stupid as many will assume, but fairly bristles with pointed facts, sharp realities and penetrating truths.*

WOULD-BE prospectors have gone to Alaska with a book under one arm, and a package of geological phrases under the other, but they could not recognize a mine if they camped on it for a month. We fell into company with a doctor, who had worked himself over into a prospector, and he could interest you for hours, talking about "petrified schist and mortified greenstone." He would sit around the campfire and make ridiculous anatomical diagnoses of all the mineral ledges within sight of the place. Although he was a voluble theorist he sadly needed experience.

He shot the first porcupine he encountered at a distance of forty yards, and after shooting it three times, he walked up until only a few feet away from it and, discovering its eyes to be open, blew off its head. When encountering the next one, he ventured much nearer, and the third one he knocked in the head with a club. He then discovered that they always had their eyes open—even when dead—and remarking something about the first one having im-

posed a trick upon him, he proceeded to interest himself in porcupines.

He said that they were not game enough to shoot, and finally insisted that such sluggish animals should not be harmed at all. He also discovered that one who killed a porcupine with the intention of getting a sirloin steak would be disappointed,—for they didn't have any sirloin to speak of. He picked up a half-grown one by the back of its neck and brought it into camp to make a pet of it. He did not know that the youthful porcupine could be so easily satisfied, as they are naturally very tame. During the cool part of the night the porcupine crawled into bed beside his benefactor. The doctor slept in a nude condition, with the exception of bed-covering, for the purpose, as he expressed it, of "exuding corporeal effluvium."

During the restless sleep of the M. D. the poor porcupine was compelled evidently to act on the defensive to prevent his being crushed. I do not say that the doctor sat down on the porcupine, but one might infer he did, if one judged by the locality in which the quills were inserted. The way that M. D. danced around our campfire like a wild Indian and called for help, at the dead hour of midnight, was interesting and amusing. As he danced and pleaded I asked:

"Where did you see them do that?"

"See whom do what?"

"The Indians."

"Why, confound your idiotic brain! Do you imagine Indians shot all these arrows into me? I tell you, it was that infernal porcupine! Do you understand? Now, go and get a small pair of forceps out of my clothes-bag and get to work!"

"But, doctor! You said you brought these along for the purpose of pulling teeth! It would be unprofessional to allow them to be used for any such base purposes!"

"Get those forceps, I tell you!"

"Oh, well, I'll get them if you insist; but if you are patient and will wait, those quills will work out in front of themselves in a day or two. It is astonishing how they will travel through a patient person."

"Did you hear my commands?"

"Certainly, doctor, but had you not better sit down while the search is being made?"

"Sit down! *Me* sit down in *this* condition! Say——"

Then because of the doctor's dangerous irresponsibility and his threatening attitude, the search was made. It was somewhat prolonged, because of the agitated earnestness with which the doctor expressed himself. He appeared to be deeply affected below the surface, for otherwise, the mosquitoes which covered his naked body would have monopolized his attention.

The forceps were found, but it was necessary to build a large fire to have sufficient light, and the doctor complained about that, too; said I was too blamed particular. Whenever he was relieved of a quill and some accompanying blood, he would act frantic and ridiculous, and jump up in the air, in such a way, that if a flashlight picture of the scene were introduced in this narrative, it would ruin the publishers. Several times during the night, after this accident happened, the doctor awakened me and asked if I were really laughing or only snoring.

From the high hills beyond the Gokona we could look down westward to where a stream of water came out from beneath a glacier, and parted half a mile below there, one branch going to the westward where it appeared to turn northward through the mountain range; while the other continued a southerly course into a lake. From thence the outlet could be seen to continue towards Copper River. That silvery thread appeared to be at our feet, but was in reality three miles away. From information previously given to us by the Indians, we knew it to be the source of the Gulkana River; but what was that other prong, and where was it leading? Was that glacier the source of two distinct rivers, the mother of twins?

We descended to that remarkable place and camped among the trees, luxuriant bunch-grass and millions of mosquitoes. The mosquitoes were not

counted—just conservatively estimated at that number. As no horse-tracks were found, and as the Griffith party, from Cook Inlet, had passed south of that place the year before, it was evident that we were the discoverers of the source of twin rivers, another one of Alaska's curiosities. We spent three days exploring down the other fork, and found that it did pass back through the mountains to the Tanana. This water coming from one glacier on the side of a rough mountain range, and then separating half a mile below, was a peculiar freak. It made it possible for a salmon to ascend the Copper, then the Gulikana, through the lakes to this place, and then descend this river to the Tanana, Yukon and so on to Behring sea. It would cause him to hustle to arrive back at the mouth of the Copper in time for another season's run. As it would mean that he had crossed through two mountain ranges and traveled about six thousand miles to do that, it would require a fish with ambition to undertake the task. It is a fact that when we were there, a canoe could have been floated from the waters of the Copper to that of the Yukon.

Down this river, where it was joined by a larger one from the west, we found several old horse tracks, among them being one mule track. That solved the riddle! This was the Delta River, which Lieutenant Castner had descended the year before, on his way from the Cook Inlet to the Yukon. They had nearly starved, and had killed and eaten the



mule which had made those tracks; and even then, they certainly would have perished if the Indians had not assisted them.

With due respect to Mr. Castner, it may be said that he was not the proper kind of a man to send on such a trip. His dictatorial manner caused the Indians to disrespect him, and invited deception on their part. From his own report, it is a wonder that they did not destroy his party. Such leaders of expeditions only make it dangerous for the lone prospectors who are at the mercy of the natives.

We had run completely out of provisions, even salt, and were living on what birds we could kill. We returned by ascending the east fork, and about a mile south of the turn we camped by a lake. There the ptarmigan were cackling in the tall bunch-grass, and ducks were swimming on the quiet water. Down the beach of the lake came a brown silvertip grizzly; he would whine and fight mosquitoes, wade out into the lake, drop down into the water and then gallop out and shake himself, making the water fly in all directions from his shaggy coat.

I quietly slipped down to the shore of the outlet, which was about 100 feet wide, and secreted myself there, to await his coming down along the opposite shore. I desired to get his picture, for the light was just right, the lake scene was most beautiful and the spruce trees bordering it made the landscape all that could be desired. He came and stood just where

I wanted him, but unfortunately the kodak had been broken during the day and it failed to snap. Failing to get the picture, I decided to kill him and take the meat to Slate Creek, as the miners were in need of it and we had five loose horses with nothing to carry.

I gave him a mortal shot, one that would have caused a deer to make a few jumps and fall over dead. The ball ranged through the heart cavity, and shattered the liver into pieces. The bear sprang into the air, fell, rolled over and over, bit the bullet hole, and ran into some brush, which he fought with desperation.

Again he appeared on the beach of the outlet, where I gave him another shot, and the same performance was repeated. He fought the brush and rocks, and his squalls and growls were exceedingly loud. He ascended a knoll, stood on his hind feet and looked around, whereupon he received his last fatal shot, and rolled over—dead; thinking, no doubt, that those were the worst mosquitoes he had ever encountered.

We swam our horses across the outlet and vainly tried to procure a picture of him. We had lost the opportunity of a lifetime:—to get a picture of a grizzly bear before and after being killed.

The next day we loaded Bruin on our pack-horses and moved back towards Slate Creek. We camped on a clear stream emptying into what we named

Summit Lake, on the east fork of the Gulkana. That stream was red with salmon, droves of them—for they could be driven—on every riffle. Just before we concluded to camp, it had just been remarked that this was an ideal place for bear, when across the water with a plunge and a splash, and up the hillside with a gallop and a snort, bounded a huge grizzly. He stopped about one hundred yards away, and gazed down with the look of the supreme monarch that he was.

With a resolve to take all of the fresh meat that came our way, I sent a bullet crashing through his heart cavity. He fell, rolled and bellowed, then came for us like a whirlwind. Another ball entered between his shoulders and neck, and the performance was repeated. Again he came on, and a third shot shattered his neck, so that he piled up in a heap, just forty-three steps away.

My companion remarked that as there would only have been time enough to have got in one more shot, and as he had no gun, and we were fifteen miles from timber, it would have been interesting to know just what I had intended doing in case I had failed to kill the bear. After a little reflection, I made the resolve never to shoot a bear when he was looking at me. That resolution, however, was completely broken about a month later. We camped right there and dined on speckled trout in preference to bear or salmon.

While my companion was looking for the horses the next morning, he killed something, which he said, if it were not for its horns, he would have called a mule. Investigation proved it to be a fat caribou. The meat of a two-year-old caribou is about the sweetest, tenderest and most toothsome of all the wild animals.

In possession of all the meat we desired, we started for Slate Creek. The salmon were so plentiful that the temptation to kill a few of them could not be resisted. I shot four, and tied them to my saddle-strings. Their tails reached down to my horse's flanks, and soon they began to flop. It appeared to me that the saddle-horse bucked over forty acres of ground, while our little dog Pete seemed to enjoy the show more than anybody.

The joke was turned on him shortly afterwards, however, when a bear was seen standing on a narrow island in the middle of the stream, eating salmon. As the water was making a great noise, and the wind was squarely across the river, neither bear nor dog knew of the other's presence until a collision was on. Pete fell backwards and jumped off into the water, while the bear plunged in on the other side. When Pete struck the water he was looking back towards the bear. Later, when we were in camp, he showed almost human humiliation, when being joked about that bear incident.

We arrived at Slate Creek, after a cold ride, in a



drenching rain. There I employed another companion to assist in exploring the head-waters of the Tanana. Our supplies, which had been cached under the shelter of some large spruce trees, at Mencomen Lake, were undisturbed. Many times have I slept on the dry ground beneath the boughs of a spruce tree, while it rained outside.

At Mentasta Lake there came into camp an Indian boy, who said he had never worn shoes or even moccasins. When asked what he would do when the snow came, he replied:

"Go all same—no shoes."

"But hiyu snow, may-be-so you die!"

"Ha-lo! Bear he no got shoes, he no die."

This boy described for us the trail to Suslota, and following it we nearly drowned a horse. From Suslota we crossed to the head-waters of Little Tokio River, thence over high glacier moraines at the head-waters of the Hoolana. This was the place Captain West had told his men he had found his gold;—the mud-glaciers are here as he described, but not the gold. We crossed these to the head of Lost Creek sometimes called Jack Creek.

At the source of Little Tokio I picked from a bank of what appeared to be slate a short rib of some large animal. In its petrified condition, it had retained its shape and grain, although the substance was a hard, slatish material. I retain that curiosity in my possession, and no one can dispute the fact



that it was once a rib-bone of some animal. How long it took for the lime to dissolve, and the structure to absorb the earthy matter, no one can say.

Rock, like everything else on earth, grows, lives and dies. I once knew of a rock when it was a bunch of clay on a bar of the Santa Maria River in California, for it had been deposited there during a freshet in 1884. Evidently it contained the elements that enabled it to solidify rapidly, for in fourteen years it had become a hard, solid sandstone.

I had a friend whose great hobby was geology, and he was so affected by the study that he would daydream about it, talking for hours about the different ages. I furnished the team for his company for a twenty-five-mile drive, just to hear him dilate on that rock. I admired him because he knew more than most other people. He looked wise as he approached the monument when it was pointed out, and the longer he looked, the wiser he appeared. After he had broken off a piece, he gave me the startling information that it was *not* Potsdam sandstone. Now I didn't know Potsdam sandstone from any other dam sandstone, but he continued to employ unlimited profanity of the character indicated while dilating about that rock. He displayed so much wisdom that it required an effort for me to ask the important question which I had come so far to propound.

When he had finished the lecture, I asked timidly

about the age of it, and he gave it unhesitatingly as several thousands of years! There—I had known of that rock from the time it was a soft mass through which one could run a sharp stick, or could cut down with a hatchet in two minutes.

I was speechless! Reincarnation had been proved, for evidently I had lived thousands of years before, and what I had seen and forgotten was beyond comprehension!

We descended Jack Creek and found an abundance of good feed for our horses. Sheep trails could be seen on the mountain sides. This creek empties into the Nabesna, a tributary of the Tanana River.

We were riding down along the bank of that stream in a leisurely fashion when we discovered a grizzly cub approaching in the creek bottom. While hiding until he had become directly below, about thirty feet away, I was surprised by a snort from another, on top of the bank and only a few yards from me. He ran and was not shot at, because it was supposed that the other one was at a greater disadvantage below. On looking over the bank, we discovered that he had heard the warning snort of his companion, and was now three hundred yards away and running his very best. We had no bear meat for that night's supper.

I spent the next day, August 27, in securing two mountain goats. Our supplies were running short, and it was necessary to have fresh meat. Fifteen

were taking their noon-day rest on the summit of a high ridge, where it was difficult to distinguish them from the small patches of snow in their vicinity.

With Pete at my heels I crept for half a day along the high precipices, and at last peeped over one of them, only to discover that the goats were out of range, and commanding a good view of their surroundings. Straight across a deep chasm were three that had ventured away from the rest to feed. They were two hundred and fifty yards away, at least, and under ordinary circumstances it would be foolish to try for them at such a great distance, but we were out of meat.

If a ball struck below them, they would dodge over the ridge and be out of sight before another shot could be placed intelligently. If shots were placed above them, they would probably remain until the range was found. That plan was worked for three shots, dropping a little lower each time, and the third shot tumbled one of them over. The fourth shot caught another as he was crossing the ridge. The afternoon was spent rolling those goats down to the foot of the mountain, where Dashiell came and assisted in carrying them into camp.

We moved down to timber, in the divide between the Copper and the Nabesna Rivers, and camped by a beautiful lake. There my brother made "jerkey" and dressed skins, while Dashiell and I explored to the Nabesna River.

## CHAPTER XVII

*A grizzly bear's rapid approach, with blood streaming from his mouth, jaws clapping, and nostrils snorting, generally acts as a powerful stimulant to the body of a man.*

ON September 3, 1900, when my body was walking about seventy yards in front of the pack-train (my thoughts were down in the States, and I was in a half-witted mood), a brown silvertip grizzly rushed up out of the small creek. He ascended the mountain-side, stopped about one hundred and thirty yards away and turned broadside. There was but one load in my 44, and we were not in the need of bear meat, but in my heedless, mental abandon, I deliberately placed a hard bullet behind his shoulders.

He rolled over, bawled, and performed the other usual preliminaries, and then turned his attention in my direction at a rate that indicated a final settlement in about nine seconds. When I twice snapped my revolver, the truthfulness as well as the awfulness of my mistake dawned—no, it *broke* in upon me with startling suddenness. I desired very much to explain and apologize, but as that bear was half-way down the hill, and his jaw-clapping indicated a ruffled disposition, my legs positively refused to re-

main there; and besides, I felt that they needed exercising.

At once I discovered that I was a remarkably good starter in a foot race. My hat was left where it indicated the starting-place very accurately, and I should not have stopped to pick it up if it had been filled with gold. I directed my course for the Nabesna River, about fourteen miles away, and planned to run by the pack-train so that my partner would know the direction I was traveling, and so also that he might cover the retreat with his 30-30 rifle. There were no trees to climb and I had no time to climb one even if a hundred had been there. I made several steps in the air to one on the ground, because I was trying to make schedule time, and had the brakes off and full steam turned on. All the reserved energy that had been stored for years made itself manifest on that particular occasion.

There was an open flat about six jumps ahead of me—a distance that is much greater than the reader may imagine—and I felt intuitively that right there the bear would familiarize himself with the seat of my trousers. As the bear was running at an angle which would head me off at that point, and as I was interested in the outcome, I glanced over my shoulder to see just how it was going to be done. I then fortunately observed that just before reaching the place of collision I should pass a small bunch of brush, and for a moment we should be out of sight of each



other. Right there, I jumped my train off the track and rolled it down an embankment, while the bear punctually arrived at the flat, only a few yards away.

After pointing his nose upward and emitting a loud snort, he became interested in the unusual sight of the pack-train. I bravely held my breath so as not to disturb his meditations, and when he again snorted, my heart acted rudely and I shrank up perceptibly. Vainly I listened for the report of that 30-30, but the bear shuffled safely away, leaving a bloody trail up a rocky canyon. Then I straightened up and walked to Dashiell and inquired why he hadn't shot. Between spasms of laughter, he replied:

"Hang it all, it wasn't *my* bear-fight!"

It generally is supposed that a bear will give chase for only a few jumps, but when the Pacific Coast grizzly bear sees you, and knows you have hurt him, I know that he will come as far as 150 yards. To satisfy some hunters who claimed that a bear would charge but a very short distance, Mr. Dashiell made his affidavit concerning the distance that this bear gave chase, and it was published afterwards in an eastern magazine.

The older a hunter becomes, the more respect he has for grizzlies. In a lonely canyon, in California, in 1884, I stood in front of a grizzly for one short round. With one stroke he separated me from my memory, then counted me out and walked away. If

ever again I enter a twenty-foot ring with a grizzly, I want some kind friend to bet all of my money on the bear.

We arrived at the Nabesna River on September 1, and there, at an old camp-ground, we found a grave having the headboard carved with the name of John Stehn, of Benicia, California. The circumstances surrounding that fatality may be of interest.

In the spring of 1899, some prospectors had sledded into that place, and there had built a boat for the descent of the Tanana River. They were throwing their bedding into the boat, when a revolver, which had been placed carelessly in a clothes-bag with the hammer on a cartridge, was discharged. The ball struck John Stehn in the neck, and in a few minutes he had bled to death.

Of course it makes no difference to the dead where they are buried, but it is not consoling to the dying prospector, away in the wilds of Alaska—with no mother, sister or loved one to smooth his brow—to know that only the night birds and little squirrels of summer, and the bleak winds of winter are to visit his resting-place. No wreaths will be laid there, but the near-by spruce will moan a lonely requiem to the dead.

Where the winter winds wail  
And the sad spruce trees moan,  
At the end of his trail  
There, he sleeps all alone.

The prospectors continued their journey down to the Indian village of Tetling, where the little son of the chief was given the same deadly revolver. The little fellow dropped it, and again it was discharged, but this time his mother dropped dead. The man who had given the weapon to the boy made his escape during the excitement, but the Indians searched everywhere for him, and to this day, if they could find him, his life would pay the forfeit. Park Griswald and two other prospectors whip-sawed the lumber, and with their tools made a crude coffin, consoling the chief thereby, and insuring their own safety.

At the source of the Nabesna River were some nuggets of native copper, and in places there were large porous boulders with small holes, showing where the metal had evidently been melted from them. The pumice stone found, indicated that at one time volcanic heat had been excessive in that locality. Moreover, a considerable quantity of volcanic ashes from the crater of Wrangell, had been spread over the country recently by the wind. This Wrangell (Unaletta) crater is a geyser-covered area where the melting snows send their water down into the internal heat to return it as steam jets that float off upon the wind as clouds of vapor. Not always is it thus, however; at times, great volumes of smoke are sent heavenward, accompanied by white, light ashes that the winds scatter over the upper valleys of the Tanana, White and Copper Rivers.

It was now time that we were taking our horses out of the high altitudes, so we returned to "Goat Camp," on the divide. From the outlet of the lake on the summit, Dashiell caught a great number of trout. There we experienced the first snow-fall of the season. In 1898 it fell on September 12, in 1899, on September 14, and this year on September 5. Those first snows disappear, usually, in twenty-four hours.

We traveled a northwesterly direction towards Suslota Lake, along the foot of the mountain range where Lake Tanada could be seen to the westward. From that point we could look down on the Copper Valley, with its silvery threads of water, its medals of lakes, and its golden badges of cottonwood, quaking asp and birch. We traveled along birch ridges where magpies flew ahead and announced our coming, just as the bluejays do in the forests of the south. Occasionally a moose or bear track was seen, but large game was scarce. The hillsides were covered with moss berries. The manzanita (little apple), which grows twelve feet high in California, was here only a moss, but the berries were just as large as in the southern climes. The juniper, used for fence-posts in other places, had also degenerated here into a moss from which possibly toothpicks could be cut, although the berries also were of the usual size.

We arrived at Suslota Lake on the fifth day after



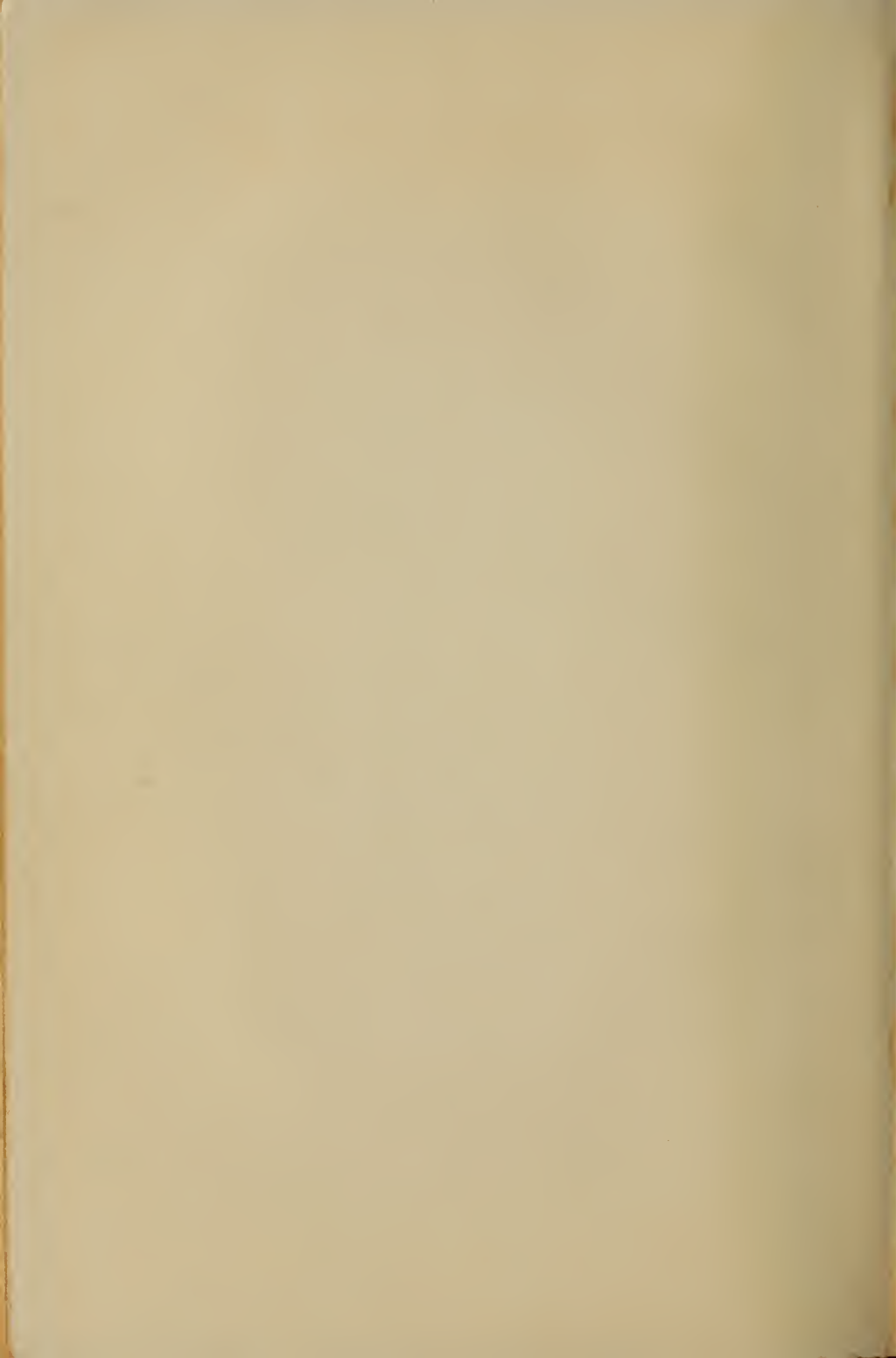
we left the divide. The outlet of that lake was a wiggling mass of salmon. This lake has derived its name from a family of Indians by the name of Suslota. They may have descended possibly from the Ainus of Japan, as they differ from the other Indians by wearing heavy beards. They have bushy hair, are very tall and most intelligent. They possess no family history, only that they were different from the other Indians. Suslota John, who lives at that lake, and Eselota, who lives one hundred miles down the Copper River, at the mouth of the Tonsina, are the only men now living of that wonderful tribe. Each of these men is six feet tall. Eselota had come up there eight years before, and, although sixty years old, had married a fifteen-year-old granddaughter of Suslota. The picture here represents Eselota and his family. His wife, the granddaughter of Suslota John, stands at his right, with their little girl in front. The one at his left is a daughter by his first wife.

Chief Ewan, of the Gulkanas, told me that his father said the Suslotas once talked a different language. He said Mentasta John was a half-Suslota Indian, and that Chief Stickman's first wife was also half-Suslota. Younger Indians, however, laugh at the idea, and think they are the same Indians as the others. Suslota John told me that he was born on the shore of this lake, as was his father, and also his grandfather. He married a Tanana squaw, and





*Eselota and His Family.*



had seventeen children and grandchildren. These Indians make a strong bow they call "chingah" (rabbit gun). A young Indian, Snelkettin, while we were there, killed a bear with one of these bows. He secreted himself beside the trail, and when the bear came along, he planted several of the copper-pointed arrows near the heart.

When at Slate Creek I had attempted to send a worthless horse out to the chief packer, who was at Copper Center, but the man, instead of shooting the beast when he became exhausted, according to military rule, abandoned the old "crow-bait," so that the Board of Survey, at Fort Liscum, sat on that horse—his absence or something—and because I could not swear that he was dead, very dignifiedly charged me eighty dollars for him. I did not need a horse, especially that one, and never thought, when watching that antiquated equine deception fade in the distance, that I should have to pay that price for his carcass, with the sole purpose of filling space in Alaska's atmosphere. No doubt, at the time of that purchase, the drifting snow-flakes were playing hide-and-seek among his ribs, but then, was I not the proud owner of a horse? Now, I feel it most fortunate that I did not buy a *good* horse, for, at that rate, he would have cost me a few thousand dollars—that is, a commonly good one would—for an extra good one would have cost much more. I am satisfied, however, with the shadow I bought. That incident caused the alli-

gator to rise in me, but time has poulticed the sore place, and I am satisfied.

I had at that time proved that the Alaskan Range carried in its fastnesses about all of the different kinds of minerals in the catalogue. Although I had been handicapped by attending to my duties as a scout I had gathered many samples of ore. One of these assayed 15 per cent. copper and \$55 in gold per ton. Another \$29, \$30 and \$32 in gold, lead and silver. One extra sample of nearly pure silver was obtained near what is known as Cobb Lake. Cinnebar and graphite were found, and also a few small ledges of free milling gold ore. The inaccessibility of their locations make them valueless at the present time.

We fell in with many prospectors who were on their way to the coast. A prospector lives in winter on a liberal mixture of hope. In summer he prospects until he eats up all of his provisions and then returns; living too often on snow-balls and rabbit tracks. He then is loaded down with rock, rags and more hope. In their cabins they divide the long winter hours into slumber and wakefulness, and when awake no doubt lament the fact that they have no companions empowered with the legal matrimonial privilege of going through their pockets when they are asleep.

We arrived safely in Valdez and found the little town taking on metropolitan airs, because a few men

had brought their wives and children up there to live. In front of a hotel, a woman was whipping a small child, and when it ran from her she repeated the punishment, then slapping another one of her children for a trivial offense. There was a man standing on the end of the long porch and I said to him:

"It is only animal instinct in a child to run away from that woman, because she punishes it every time she catches it. Such a brutal mother should not be allowed to raise her children, as she is liable to make criminals of them."

He slowly removed the cigar from the aperture of his face and replied:

"Well, sir, my experience with *that* woman's disposition, while living as her husband for twenty years, impresses me with the fact that if you should insist on giving her that information, it would be advisable for you to do so over a long-distance telephone."

Then he deliberately replaced his cigar while I retreated to seclusion, remarking that there were times when I preferred to be alone.

They had installed a telephone service in Valdez. One of the old-timers was so indifferent and sullen towards me that I expected trouble, and was not surprised when he challenged me to fight a duel of one-hundred words on that telephone. I delayed my answer to give his nerves time to weaken. I fight duels by proxy, and intended to secure a stuttering man to



stand up in my stead in this desperate encounter; but my antagonist probably heard of my intentions, for when I accepted, he turned pale and disgracefully withdrew his challenge.

As I was walking along the street "Whiskey Jim" staggered from a saloon with a badly bruised and bleeding face. As I had not seen him for nearly a year, I inquired the cause, and he replied:

"Powell, for two years I have been stinking for a fight, and I'll be hanged if a fellow in there didn't just smell me!"

Here, as the hardships of the summer were past, I had only pleasant reflections. I cannot understand the narrow and contracted views of those persons whose minds never are allowed to expand beyond the confines of such a strenuously congested mass of misery as is a city of human beings. How could Samuel Johnson have known anything of life when he wrote:

"When a man is tired of London he is tired of life, for there is in London all there is in life."

To my companions and myself, the experiences of 1900—the glaciers, rivers and swamps; bears, caribou and goat; the castellated peaks of the Suslota, the precipitous walls of the Hoolana, and the lakes in their sequestered solitudes, were all only delightful pictures in memory's halls.

## CHAPTER XVIII

*"Wild and wide are my borders, stern as death is my sway,  
And I wait for the men who will win me—and I will  
not be won in a day;  
And I will not be won by weaklings, subtile, suave and  
mild,  
But by men with hearts of vikings, and the simple faith  
of a child."*

R. W. SERVICE.

I TAKE exception to the last words of the third line. How many brutal men have bit the frontier dust because they attempted to awe some mild-mannered man! Always beware of the mild, polite man who expresses regard for the rights of others, for so will he defend his own. I have seen a large human brute throw up his hands and, refusing to cross a dangerous river, return home, while a little, slim bundle of nerves remained, built a raft, crossed the river and made his fortune. Nerve, backed by morality and right, makes the man; and the really brave ones are those who have the courage to do right.

I withdrew my name from the list of Deputy U. S. Surveyors for Alaska to devote all of my time to prospecting. During the summer of 1901, James McCarthy, "Colonel" Launtz and myself were des-

tined to eat each others' cooking while we explored the head-waters of the Shusitna River. We built castles with no other foundations than that we were going on a strictly prospecting trip. It is more pleasant to build castles than it is to fall from their dizzy heights. I have fallen so far that I have been astonished to find I was the only person who was hurt.

The subject of falling suggests the incident of the Swede who fell two hundred and fifty-six feet down a Treadwell shaft and was unhurt. When he was helped out, he exclaimed:

"I one big yumper!"

The man who holds the record for high jumping at Treadwell, however, was not the Swede, but a fellow who went up in front of a blast of giant powder, and of whom nothing came down but a suspender buckle. I was told that before the coroner would sit on the remnant, he gave the balance of the remains an hour to put in an appearance. My informer said that this was an official recognition of an ascent of 119,873 feet and 6 inches. Possibly this may give us an approximate idea of how far one may fall and be killed. It is natural for human beings to fall, and has been so since our ancestors fell from grace. Children fall out of cradles, and later out of apple trees, and when cured of that, they fall into things, such as love and trouble.

On our way to the interior, I saw a man attempting

to wade the Tekeil River with a heavy pack strapped to his back. The current washed him from his footing, and, with the pack holding him down, he would have drowned if I had not ridden my saddle horse in there and pulled him out. When he recovered, I asked:

"Didn't you know better than to go into such dangerous water with a heavy pack like that strapped tightly to your back?"

"Well," he answered, "I suspicioned that I had made a mistake, just as I began to strangle the last time!"

We passed dozens of men carrying packs, who were on their way to the Slate Creek diggings. That was two hundred miles away, but they had heard that gold was there, and so they were going. They could not realize that long before the news had reached civilization, it had been too late to secure a valuable claim, and that they were just going in there to look at other men's gold.

We found sleds by the trail, where men had become exhausted at trying to convert themselves into quadrupeds, and had given it up to go and tell of Alaska's hardships. I once attempted to pull a sled, but relinquished the intention with the thought that both industry and laziness are habits. However, I once saw a man make a great start in life by pulling a sled. He started with it down a very steep mountain.

We met an Indian whose squaw and dogs were heavily packed. When asked why he did not carry the squaw's pack, he replied:

"Me got em dog to carry pack; squaw, he no got dog."

It was among those mountains during the winter of 1898 and 1899 that a companion of Charley Johnson fell into the water and became mortally chilled. Charley urged him to hurry to some near-by timber where a fire could be built, but he said:

"Charley, we have safely weathered many storms together, but now I feel the final chill crawling up to my heart, and I know it to be the last!"

Then he gasped and fell lifeless to the ground. Charley arrived at Quartz Creek, more dead than alive. After recovering he made many trips in search of the body of his partner, but never found it.

We crossed Tekeil River on a narrow bridge, over water that was thirty feet deep. Even horses become imbued with recklessness in Alaska, and ours unhesitatingly undertook any task required of them. Possibly a thousand horses crossed over this bridge during that summer.

Our ascent of the Copper River was the same old story of a battle with gnats, flies and mosquitoes. It is very probable that many of those mosquitoes could whip a wolf. They are the embodiment of bravery. I have seen a single mosquito attack a full-grown dog. It has been said that the Alaska mosquitoes





*Pack-train crossing on a Pole-bridge.*



differ from others by having a white spot between their eyes about the size of one's hand. I have met no baldfaced ones up-to-date, but the Colonel asserts that he met one on the trail, and fortunately for him, the monster was eating a squirrel at the time.

After enjoying chicken stew for an evening meal, we were greatly amused at the Colonel's glorious exaggerations. The Colonel was a most agreeable camp companion, and very entertaining. He told of seeing a salmon in the river that was nine feet long. We worked with him until bed-time, "Jew-ing" him down, an inch at a time, until he had reduced the length to thirty-six inches; but there he balked and declared by Mt. Drum that he would not take off another inch. The task of shortening up that salmon drove Mac to bed and caused me to reason with the Colonel. I told him that about all the satisfaction I ever had derived from the study of grammar was the proof that all other grammarians were liars, and added that I thought he should either write fiction or be a professed grammarian.

The Colonel replied that the Americans were retrograding rapidly into a nation of liars. He said they lied to their children about a mythical Santa Claus, and later on they compelled them to study fiction in the schools. They did this, he declared, with a pretense of studying English, when English could just as easily be taught in the study of natural and political history. He insisted that the Americans con-

stantly pay for things they do not need, and buy books of fiction because they want to be humbugged. As an instance in point he cited the following circumstance: Lewis and Clark wrote facts about their journey across the continent, but the public demanded a liar to tarnish the story with romance and an Indian woman to guide them across. Subsequently the directors of the Portland fair erected a monument to the mythical squaw, because they preferred that which was false—a deception and a lie. The real squaw only guided them a short distance.

He objected to the Americans being taught German, French and the dead languages, when they should know that there are no business opportunities in Europe for their sons, while the whole of South America is a vast field for our goods and implements. Instead of teaching the Americans the English and Spanish languages, they cross the ocean to pay for languages they do not need. He added: "If President Roosevelt said California had no schools, who knows but he was correct, and if that State were one of the leading ones in education, what about the others?"

That question sent me to bed, where I lay and writhingly attempted to digest the Colonel's lecture. I thought of the many graduates who are comparatively ignorant of geography. How few of them know whether Sydney is in Australia or New Zealand, or that Australia is larger than the United

States. If they talked with you about Alaska they probably would refer to it as "The Klondike." I thought of a time when I had shown an educated lawyer some photographs of Alaska mountains that bordered the sea, and had attempted to explain to him that they were about five thousand feet high, and he had indirectly called me a liar by saying that it was impossible, as mountains did not attain such great heights at the edge of salt water. He evidently assumed that all the world was like Monterey County, California, and that one would be compelled to go as far from salt water as he would from there to the Sierra Nevadas, to see high mountains. He evidently did not know that St. Elias looks down from twenty thousand feet to the ocean that laps its base.

I was reminded of a county school-board which recently required scholars to tell how a balky horse acts, and thereby impressed upon the scholars the fact of how silly a school-board could act. I thought drowsily that if I had devoted more time to the study of English, I should not now be attempting so often to perform the acrobatic feat of constructing sentences without subject and predicate foundations; and then I—I—passed into a fairy-land of slumber.

On July 4 we arrived at the place where Mr. Date and I had left for the coast in 1899, with no footwear. Now there was an abundance of bunchgrass for our horses. The forest fires had quieted the mosquitoes, and as the warm weather was decid-



edly enervating, we concluded to be patriotic and rest. The fires had driven our little dog Pete across the river, where he had traveled for one whole day, and then had swum over to our camp at night.

Some visitors came into camp while we were baking bread for our future needs, and the conversation turned upon cooking. One said he had cooked on a Yukon stove, another said he had cooked on a large hotel range, and the Colonel announced that he had cooked on a cattle range.

On Slate Creek we saw string after string of sluice boxes, attended by long-bearded, long-haired and high-booted men, shoveling, picking and panning. Others would not work, because they wanted \$15.00 a day and could get but \$10.00. A few claims were producing more than \$100.00 a day to the man.

One Sunday, when Slate Creek was abandoned by all hands, because they were attending a miners' meeting in another gulch, I walked up the creek to find it deserted, and thousands of dollars in the yellow metal scattered around the tents in gold-pans and tin-cups. No one was left to watch over the treasure, as thieves in such localities are not protected by law.

Sensational writers often harmfully and falsely educate the masses in their statements regarding life on the frontier. It is a pitiful sight to see a young man coming west, or northwest, with a six-shooter

conspicuously hanging on the right, but wrong, side, in accordance with customs obtained from illustrated fictional periodicals and cheap shows.

This Slate Creek was the gulch on which Gokona Charley, the Indian, had vainly endeavored to persuade me to investigate and locate in 1899; and no doubt but it was the original Captain West discovery. We left there and traveled for days over a rolling hill country and past the point where I had killed the bear by the lake the year before. We crossed the Delta River where it was not deep enough to swim our horses, and entered one of the then-unexplored sources of the Shusitna River.

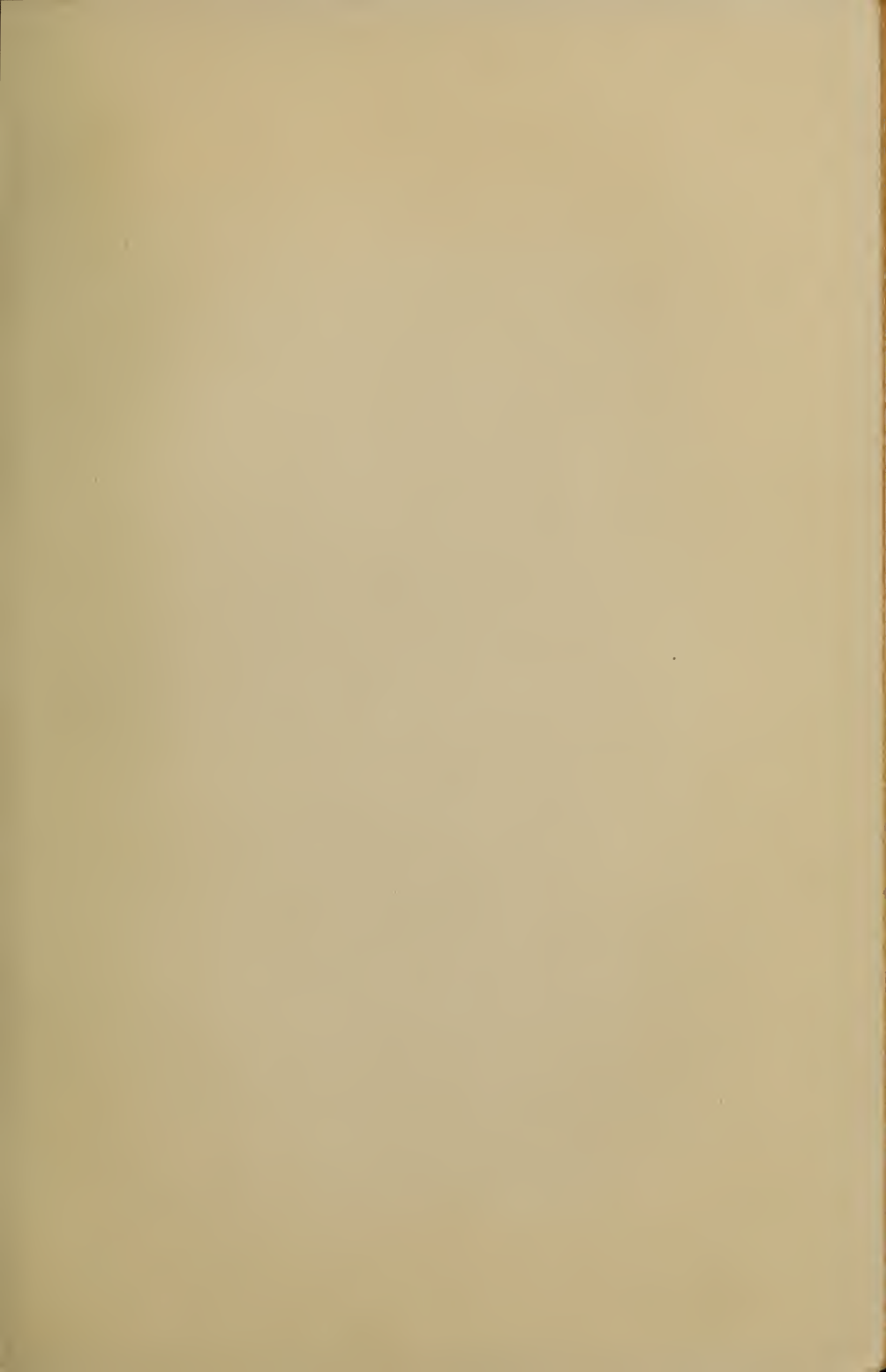
We crossed by easy passages through the mountains and discovered another glacier which was the source of two rivers, namely, the Eureka, a tributary of the Delta, and a fork of the East Fork of the Shusitna, now known as the McClarren River. Just below the glacier we crossed the McClarren where it was a mile wide. We found dry willow to burn when we were above timber, but the mosquitoes drove us down to where we could build large fires to smoke them from our horses. It is astonishing how quickly a horse will learn that smoke protects him from those insects.

I discovered a beautiful waterfall near the source of the McClarren. On those travels we found few signs where Indians had made their annual fall hunts, but at that time they were down the river

catching salmon. The subject of Indians caused the Colonel to tell about killing them until Mac lost his appetite. Evidently he had killed thousands of them—that is, Comanches, Apaches and Sioux, for he wished to impress us with the idea that he didn't count such as Diggers, Piutes and Siwashes.

Mac and I left the Colonel to care for camp and for our crippled horses, while we prospected towards the west. We ascended over rolling, gravelly hills, through which is a strip of old ocean wash that may some day be worked for gold, yet we did not stop to prospect it, but climbed among the mountains where one would not think a horse could get a footing, and at night we descended a steep canyon, where we camped and enjoyed ptarmigan stew, while it rained.

The next day we again climbed among mountains where the sun was kissing new life into bluebells and buttercups. At one place, a caribou cow and calf approached to investigate the centaur-like intruders upon their northern domain. They stopped and looked, then trotted down fifty yards nearer. The little red calf trotted alongside of its mother's flanks and affectionately rubbed its little head against them. They came within fifty yards of us, and not until we had dismounted from our horses did they become really frightened and scamper away. The cow was too poor to shoot, and we would not separate them by killing the calf. Away up on a ridge could be seen the long horns of the cow, as she stopped to look





*Alaskan Caribou Swimming.*



back, but a report from my pistol caused her to disappear in the distance, and probably to follow more cautiously the trails of her ancestors.

It really is a pity that human butchers are allowed to run at large and needlessly kill all kinds of game, even when it is unfit to be eaten. There are those who will kill and leave the carcass to rot, but fortunately such men are few, and they are never experienced frontiersmen. Both caribou and moose are wonderfully good swimmers and do not hesitate to swim across large rivers and even lakes. I have heard of men who would row a boat up to them, and there kill them, while they were swimming for their lives. Such men have no spirit, and they are the kind who brag about shooting deer with shotguns or killing fish with dynamite.

We crawled up to one high divide, but a parachute would be necessary to enable one to drop down on the other side. There the aneroid indicated an elevation of seven thousand feet above the sea, and there, too, the clouds drifted away and allowed us one brief glimpse of Mount McKinley—or, as it is known by the Indians, Mount Bulsha, which is the largest and highest mountain on the North American continent. Another storm was approaching, and we hurriedly descended down to the edge of the Shusitna valley, where we camped among some dead spruce trees where the grass was as high as our horses' backs.

A week before that I had traveled alone from the head of Clear Creek, and had arrived at the source

of what is now known as Valdez Creek. On the way, I found an eighteen-foot vein of lignite coal. I also washed out some gold prospects on Valdez Creek, but they were of little importance. We had now come around to a point near the lower end of Valdez Creek, and close to some new good placer diggings. There Mr. McCarthy probably washed the first gold from the immediate vicinity of the Valdez Creek diggings, but the credit for opening up the creek belongs, not to us, but to those who afterwards "mushed" in to that place and spent years in opening it up. They discovered the pay streaks by continual digging, and to such men must be given all the credit of opening placer camps and mining districts in the north, and not to the ramblers.

On our return to the Colonel's camp, we saw one little bear. It was about this time that Archie Parks, twenty miles from that point, was most unlovingly hugged by a bear. The bear did not release his hold until the little Siwash dog of Archie's nipped its heels. While the bear gave chase to the dog, Archie ran to his companions in a dazed and bloody condition. Fortunately, Parks was not seriously hurt, and after seventeen stitches had been taken in his scalp, he remarked that he felt bearly impressed with the idea of returning to Slate Creek for further repairs. When we arrived at the old camp, we found Colonel Launtz sitting by the campfire, watching for Indians.

## CHAPTER XIX

*If a trail doesn't bring an appetite to a man, it will lead the man to an appetite.*

FROM that hospital camp we returned in a southerly direction. We recrossed the McClarren River, where we saw more than one hundred wild geese swimming down the stream, having been floated from their island nests by the high water. They could "honk" equal to their grandfathers, but they couldn't fly, and their short wings proclaimed them to be goslings.

We camped on an old Indian trail that leads from the Gulkana country to Knik, by way of the Matanuska, and on that trail we saw the tracks of a white man leading westward. It is probable that those were the last seen tracks of Clark Moore, of Fresno, California. He passed through that way but never again was heard from. There were tracks of three Indians on that trail, and if not murdered by them, he must have died an awful death of a wild, crazed and wandering prospector. His last moments may have been happy in the delusion that he had found the rich pay he so long had sought.

We traveled several days in an easterly direction, over high gravelly and brush-covered ridges, enclosing numerous lakes. All lakes that had outlets were

stocked with trout. The hills were literally covered with cackling ptarmigan, and our diet generally consisted of a choice of ptarmigan or duck stew, or fried trout. Once, when Mac crippled a duck, our little dog Pete was sent into the water after it. When he approached, it dived, and down went Pete. For a minute the water was smooth; then up came the little dog with the duck in his mouth.

At another time, when we were camped near the shore of a lake that formed one of the sources of the Gulkana River, we discovered the fresh tracks of three Indians. As they were near our camp and did not come in, it was evident that they were renegades, out for no good purpose.

When crossing through a high pass between the rolling hills and near the Gulkana Lake, I saw two caribou, which were about a quarter of a mile away. Both had large, long antlers, but evidently one was a bull, and the other a small heifer. The male stood on the point of a small hillock and displayed the august bearing of a leader, gazing far away into the blue, and over Alaska's spruce forest beneath. He lowered his great antlers until his nostrils had sniffed at the bunch-grass at his feet, and when he raised them again, their golden polished surface played reflections with the light of the northern sun.

I left my horse and noiselessly crawled to a place where it appeared that I was within reach of him. Placing my pistol on a hummock of the tundra, I

aimed to the top of his shoulder and fired; but that elevation was evidently insufficient and the bullet must have struck beneath him. It was farther away than I had first supposed, so I raised to sight above him and fired again. Elk-like, he never flinched, but before another shot could be carefully placed, he walked a few steps and lay down. Then he got up on his feet and turned broadside, so that another bullet was placed as near the second as possible, and he slowly turned and again lay down. From the way his large antlers were rocking, it was evident that his life-blood was passing out.

The heifer was looking in my direction, and I raised my white hat to further excite her curiosity. She, antelope-like, quickly responded by trotting in a large circle that brought her much nearer. She stopped and looked for a moment, and then continued the circle; the next time came nearer, and the third circle brought her so near that, when she stopped to look, I gave her a mortal shot at one hundred and fifty-six steps. She continued her circle in a rapid trot and after going about fifty steps tumbled over, heels up. She was killed just as quickly with that shot from a .38 cal. pistol as if she had been shot with a 45-70 rifle.

It was found that the last two shots at the bull had struck near together and one of them had pierced the heart. The Colonel stepped the distance and then advised me to mould my bullets and mix



salt with the lead, so that it would preserve the meat until I could arrive to where it was.

We loaded our horses with meat, as I never waste it or travel with one who does. That evening we descended to timber, strung the meat up in trees and remained there several days prospecting. Here, the Colonel offered to bet that Mac could eat a caribou at two sittings, but the challenge was declined.

I descended in search of a way that would lead us off from the mountain and through the timber, and had not gone half a mile from the camp when I came out within thirty steps of a large bull moose. He was a pretty sight as he dignifiedly turned his antlers, and instantly I regretted that I had not brought my kodak. Instinctively I caught hold of my pistol, but he was peaceably inclined and walked away. I did not care to kill him, as we had plenty of meat in camp; but at that time of year these animals are dangerous, and when one is so near they are liable to charge.

We descended to the river between the lakes, and there came upon a camp of some prospectors. Among them was a "tenderfoot" who appeared to take everything good-naturedly, but acknowledged that he did not enjoy the exposures that the life entailed. At least I inferred as much when he announced:

"Here I've been traveling all summer, with no roof over me except the canopy of heaven! It is

with a smile in my eye that I confess I have used the soft side of a rock for a pillow while sleeping in these wilds!"

"Have you found any gold?" I asked.

"What? me find gold? Why, these fellows say I couldn't save a color of gold from a pan of sawdust! All the gold I have found, you could put in your eye, and it wouldn't make you wink! I'm not out for gold, but for experience, and now I am overloaded with that. No, sir, I haven't done a thing for myself or any one else, all summer. They did send me to search for the horses one morning, and the whole crowd spent the rest of the day looking for me. After that, they said they wanted me only for an ornament to the expedition. One calls me the mascot, and another the hoodoo. As soon as possible, I am going to return to my people."

"I suppose the fatted calf will be slaughtered on that occasion?"

"No, sir; a calf wouldn't do it justice. It will be an ox!"

The next night we camped by a beaver lake that had been formed by a dam across a ravine, which backed water up over several hundred acres. It had been recently constructed, as green willows were to be seen in it. There should be a fine imposed on any one who brings a beaver skin from Alaska. That would dispel the Indians' incentive for killing them. There are vast areas especially adapted for beaver

pasturage, and good for nothing else, and if the beavers were protected for twenty years, the country would again be restocked with the fur that assisted Russia in clearing six millions of dollars.

Mr. Quigley accompanied us from Slate Creek as far as Indian Creek. It was on this creek that Quigley climbed a tree, and all the enticing looks of two full-grown grizzlies could not induce him to come down. In writing this manuscript, I carelessly left Quigley up there in the tree, but a friend, when reading it, advised me to get him down, even though it were necessary to shoot him out. As he seemed to be a pretty good sort of a fellow, I will elaborate the account and explain what really happened.

A dog came into camp and frightened the bears, and when they ran away, Quigley descended. He said that he had been busy repairing a pack-saddle, when, upon hearing a noise, he looked over his shoulder and saw two bears within a few steps of him. He had a 45-70 rifle near, but as the tree was closer than the gun, he chose the tree. If he had had a Frontier revolver strapped to him, from his perch he could have killed the bears, but he was one of those who depend upon a rifle.

A prospector who depends on a rifle always is telling what he could have killed if only he had had his gun with him. He becomes weary of carrying a rifle everywhere he goes, and consequently about half the game he sees is when he is unarmed.

There were signs that many Indians once had made this country their home. An old trail leads up the creek and over the rolling hills beyond. There can be seen old "high-signs," which may be found in all Indian countries. Old dead bushes bore knife marks that were made before we were born, and they suggested the query of: How many, old and young, with their joys and troubles, have trodden this deep-worn path? They may have had hopes, but it is doubtful if they extended beyond a prospective dance, "pot-latch," or a moose hunt; they had their jealousies, however—sickness and death.

The countless herds of wild animals contributed their numbers to aboriginal support until strong tribes inhabited these wilds. When the herds were nearly exterminated, they being the principal support of the Indians, the red men, too, lay themselves down and died. A few caribou and moose survive the contest, but fewer Indians.

It rained so hard while we were at the headwaters of that creek, that after two days of prospecting, we returned to our camp, and found that Quigley had left for the Yukon. Montgomery and McKenney were there, having spent the summer on the Tanana and White Rivers, and they had eaten nothing but sheep meat for three weeks.

We were sitting by the campfire after supper, exchanging summer experiences with our visitors, when the Colonel told a very remarkable story. Whenever



the Colonel tells anything, however, it *is* remarkable. He told us of once having discovered a wonderful deposit of lead on the summit of the Olympics. He peeled a flake of it, which he rolled down hill until it gained momentum by its weight, and then he lost control of it. He said it rolled down the mountain, eating deeper and gaining weight and speed until it tore up trees and left a great canyon as its track.

There was silence in that camp for awhile, because no one felt competent to criticise the remarkable statement. Even Pete, our dog, had a doubtful expression on his countenance, but it was undesirable to reprimand him in the Colonel's presence. Cautiously remonstrating to the Colonel the next day, I said:

"Colonel, those visitors are strangers to us, and, while no one can dispute that remarkable occurrence, because you say you were alone at the time, they may be inexperienced in prospecting, and entertain doubts about it."

"See here," he replied, "if you don't sit right down on strangers at the beginning, they will impose on you. All young upstarts who come along invariably attempt to tell bigger lies than any one else, unless you knock them out at first, and then hold your club over them as long as they are in your camp. No, sir! I told *that* for self-protection, sir! It is a duty I owe to you and our camp, sir! We can't afford to allow ourselves to be imposed on, sir!"





*Camping in Copper River Valley.*



Near the mouth of the Chistochina River an old Indian grave had washed away and the bones were scattered along the bank. I told Chistochina Charley about it, and this nineteen-year-old Indian replied:

"Yep, he bones of my grandmother. Long time grandmother catchem salmon from Copper River, now Copper River catchem grandmother."

We crossed the Gulkana River and camped where some Indians were, and they cautioned us to sleep away from near the firelight, as a white man, while traveling along the trail a few days before, had been shot by an unknown enemy. They suspected that three Tananas had done it, because they had heard night-calls a few nights before. When they crossed the river the next morning, they had discovered the moccasin tracks of three Indians. As we had seen the moccasin tracks of three Indians, several times during the summer, this verified my first conclusions in regard to them. I think they were searching for a white man who had tied Indian Albert up to a tree, and had whipped him for stealing. This white man, instead of going into the Shusitna country, as they had supposed, had gone down the river to Fairbanks, and at this writing is at Goldfield, Nevada.

We swam our horses across the Tazlina River. Here Charley Stobell, of Port Angeles, Washington, was drowned in an attempt to cross on a mule.

Man and beast drifted down and rolled over a large boulder. Charley never came to the surface.

A man's social, or monetary, standing in civilization exerts no influence whatever, when he goes on one of those Alaskan trips. Geologists, military captains, postal inspectors and capitalists have discovered that they cannot depend on others who are occupied in caring for themselves, and that they are compelled to do their share of the labor. They must make a choice of the tasks as they present themselves in this way: Which do you prefer, horse-hunting, cooking or preparing camp? If you are a good woodsman, one who can not become lost, you are the one to go horse-hunting.

You travel until tired, then listen for the forty-second time for that horse-bell; then, sitting down on a log, you continue to listen, while a raven croaks at you as he passes up the river. You take out your knife and whittle, and wonder why you came to Alaska; then you cock up your left ear and listen some more.

A little bird about the size of a butcher-bird, one that prospectors call "Camp Robber," alights on the ground, impudently near, and squints one eye up at you, not asking your business but trying to discover something he can steal. He will follow you to camp and steal everything there except the pack-saddles. A little spruce squirrel will descend from a tree near you, chatter "clinket" and then run up

the tree a few feet, only to return nearer the next time. You admire his red coat, his bushy, grayish tail and his round, beady black eyes. He may run up on a limb and there warble a few notes of music. I was in Alaska three years before I discovered that those melodious notes were produced by a squirrel; I supposed that "clinket" was all of its vocabulary.

You kill a large mosquito that has been tapping a vein on the back of your hand, and that makes just one thousand and one of them that you have killed while sitting there. A large bumblebee comes buzzing around a lupine, and a big green-headed horsefly alights on a fern; then you get up and turn over a rotten chunk of wood and uncover a nest of very large black ants.

You move away about one hundred yards, stop to listen for the horse-bell, and start to go again, when a spruce hen flies out of a tree within a few feet of your head. It alights on another tree near by, then cranes its long neck at you, turns its little head to one side, and exhibits its speckled breast to advantage. The spruce hen is about the size of a leghorn chicken, with black specks on a grayish bosom, and is rather stylish, and inclined to put on airs.

You meander a quarter of a mile, and among some large trees you find wild red currants on bushes about three feet high. You eat a double handful of them, make a wry face, and decide them to be



about as sour as whiz. Presently you conclude there was an agreeable whang to their taste, your mouth waters for more, and you eat another handful and make more wry faces; then eat some black currants which have a musky flavor, then some moss berries to take away their taste; and then finally some blue berries to take that taste of the moss berries from your mouth.

You hear the horse-bell, travel a quarter of a mile, hear it again, but not so loud; then travel another quarter of a mile and you don't hear it at all. You decide that you have gone in the wrong direction, and after traveling an hour over a moss-covered country you come out on the bank of the river, feeling exhausted. You look in the dust of the trail there, and find a fresh bear track. Somehow, this discovery refreshes you wonderfully, and you immediately return to camp to impart the information that the horses have taken the back track; but there you find them, all saddled, for they had been lying down, not one hundred yards from where you had slept.

Mounting the horses and with pack-horses following, the three of you travel along river bars to where a place is found that is sufficiently shallow to admit of fording. Men and horses safely cross through the swift water, with the exception of one horse that starts too low down; and one man rides down there to turn him back. He gets into deep

water where the waves dash against the boulders, and when all are on the bank except this one man and horse, you see them strike a large boulder, roll over and disappear beneath the surface. Presently the horse is seen to gain the shore without his rider. The man's dog, that swam near them all the time, also reaches land and wistfully looks over the river's surface.

It requires an hour of time for you to go through the brush and fallen timber to the horse, and another hour is spent in looking along the bank for the lost one, but glacier streams never give up the dead. With the riderless horse you return to your companions and go a mile farther along, camping among a heavy growth of spruce, where there is good horse feed near by.

After partaking of your evening meal, and you and your remaining companion are silently gazing at the blazing campfire—for the sad incident of the day has cast a gloom over you—you express your sadness in words, whereupon your companion suggests a diversion of mind to something more pleasant. You reply that it is useless to try, as there is the rolled sleeping-bag on the other side of the fire; whereupon the drowned man's dog goes to it, looks inquisitively at you and then trots off down the trail towards the river.

You conclude to retire and crawl into your sleeping-bags, with both your hands beneath the boughs

of the same tree. The dismal howl of a dog comes to your ears from away down on the river bottom. The embers of the fire die low, a lone owl hoots from the dark recesses of the forest, and the stars of the September night shoot their streams of light down between the trees. The dog returns and lies down beside his master's sleeping-bag. That is a sample of the life led by the Alaska frontiersmen in summer-time.

## CHAPTER XX

*The cord that ties the trail-boys, has lashed them heart to heart;*

*No stage presents their joys, no actors play their part;*

*Their struggles are seldom known, because through wilds untrod,*

*Those daring spirits roam where there is naught but God.*

I SHED the above after eating a breakfast of brain food and then being jostled over a very rough road. The reader is warned to prepare for any volcanic outburst of rhyme that may be exploded in future.

We rested a few days at Copper Center and then continued our trip to the Coast. A description of a trip down the Copper River that was taken by seven prospectors that September, 1901, may be interesting. They were Harry Thompson, Charles M. Sclosser, J. B. Morris, Al. Dowling, C. A. Punches, J. A. Jacobson and "Shorty" Fisher. The last named was assisted into the boat by the others, at Copper Center, and when Punches was asked the cause of "Shorty's" helplessness, he replied:

"He's been shot through the ham!"

It was supposed that the slight wound had been caused by a malicious Indian, and possibly one of the three before-mentioned. He had been walking

along the trail at the time the shot was fired from ambush. "Shorty" was now constantly reminding the others of his presence by incessant groans.

The boat was cast off and, aided by six sturdy oarsmen, it flitted along on the swift current like a bird on the wing. It darted down rapids where the hidden boulders sent spray high in the air; and around curves, between high gravel banks and broad level flats. These flats were covered with cottonwood, spruce and willow trees, with occasionally cleared spots where grass grew to prodigious height, and waved and bent in the soft breeze. Sometimes an Indian "set-down" was passed, where old dirty rags were waved at the passing white men. Little boys threw pebbles into the muddy Copper, and, with scowling faces, hurled a jargon of anathema, their natural heritage, after the white adventurers.

They passed through Wood Canyon, with its high moss-covered walls confining the deep whirlpools of the enraged Copper. Even the color of the water indicated anger, at its source. When they arrived at the rapids, all hands, even the dogs, Ginger and Joe, jumped ashore, for it was necessary to line the boat past two sections of the rapids. By good boatmanship they could cross and descend a slough that would avoid the lower rapids and the danger of being hurled against and beneath the falling ice of Miles glacier. Before they had lined to that point, the boat was swept from their hands. It capsized







*The Dangerous Ice-Field.*

and spilled in the turbulent water all they possessed, excepting the gold in their belts.

There they were, cold, wet and hungry, with the raging ice waters of the Copper in front, and the glacier below—tumbling blocks of ice as large as town squares into a two-hundred-acre sheet of deep water. They would sink out of sight, then rise to float off as icebergs. The men were compelled to sit around all night, without a fire, and listen to the booming of the falling ice, while the cold rain drenched them to the skin. Death? Yes, that was what it would have meant to most men, but they were inured to hardship and had been made resourceful by frontier experiences; they did not despair even in such a dangerous and desolate locality.

The next morning they managed to climb back on to the glacier. There they decided to cross the four miles of dangerous ice, and attempt to descend the left bank of the Copper, where possibly they might build a raft of driftlogs and willow-withes sufficiently strong to carry them across the river. Thence, by traveling down along the bank, they could go possibly to Alganik trading-post.

It was perilous to jump crevasses, or to walk between the yawning ones, so the whole of that day was spent in crossing that dangerous ice-field. All the while it rained, and the booming of the breaking glacier, only a few hundred yards below them, was constantly heard. Occasionally, little Ginger, so

named because of his color, would sit on the edge of a yawning crevasse and howl, then run up and down until he had found a narrow place where he could leap across.

They were safely over by night, and once more on the level bottom of the Copper, where they built a sickly fire from wet driftwood; but they had nothing with which to allay their pangs of hunger. They traveled another day, and "Shorty" grumblingly followed to another starvation camp. Here, however, they found "chauce," a wild parsnip root, that is the farinacious diet of the Indians. They managed to dig enough of that for a taste, but it was a poor quality of food.

Another day was spent in traveling to a place where further progress in that direction was impossible, for the Copper ran to their side and against a mountain. They had found no material with which a raft could be made, and, discouraged and weary, they again assembled around a flickering campfire while the cold rain beat upon them.

Occasionally they slept, only to dream of food and the comforts of home, and then awaken to realize their bitter situation. This had a depressing effect, in spite of Jacobson's laughter, which was a well-meant, but weak effort.

They had passed a wrecked boat, about thirty miles back up the river, and it was suggested that if they could return, patch it up and again attempt

the rapids, they would exhaust their only resource. It appeared to be impossible to recross the glacier without food, and the mention of such a hazardous undertaking brought renewed groans, imprecations and prayers from "Shorty." With one square meal, however, it might be possible, but *that* was imperatively necessary. One of the men, rousing himself from deep thought, said:

"Boys, we must kill a dog, make a square meal out of him and then mush back! Of the two dogs, I guess the most appetizing would be little Ginger."

The affectionate spaniel, hearing his name spoken, approached the speaker, and his inquisitive look was construed to mean, "I'm ready!" So poor, faithful Ginger was soon killed, skinned and cooked.

After partaking of a square meal of roast dog, five of the party bade "Shorty" and Punches good-bye, and began the dangerous attempt of returning for the wrecked canoe. Punches was to care for "Shorty," while "Shorty" expressed a willingness to pray for the whole crowd. At the first declaration of this undertaking, Punches said:

"See here, 'Shorty,' if you *must* pray, please cut me out. Sabe? I must keep busy at digging roots for both of us, and it would be preferable for you to assist, defer praying, and thank God when you get out. Besides, it is very doubtful if you could obtain an audience with the Creator, anyway, with your admixture of profanity and supplication."



But "Shorty" persisted in praying and groaning, while Punches dug roots and profanely qualified his expressions of disgust at "Shorty."

It was with a feeling of complete abandonment that "Shorty" and Punches watched the receding forms of their companions, when they left on their uncertain mission. Their success was possible but not probable, and if they secured the boat, it was a question whether some of them would not lose their lives on the glacier, or on their return. The miserable days were anxiously passed by those two lonely, starving human beings, while they computed their slender chances of being rescued from that isolated locality. With no shelter or bedding, they sat around on rocks while it rained, rained, rained, and "Shorty" cried, grumbled and prayed.

The five sturdy adventurers recrossed the glacier, scaled the sides of precipices where the raging river crawled far below, and slept beneath spruce bushes during the nights. They found the boat, and with their knives cut away the damaged portion, then burned the nails from the useless boards and replaced the stern, making it much better and stronger than they had expected to do. They lined this empty boat safely through the rapids, and joyfully floated down towards the camp of Punches and "Shorty."

When they were seen, "Shorty" yelled that his prayers had saved them, and rushed for the boat, hugging the rescuers, one at a time. Then he and

Punches declared each other to be insane, while Jacobson acknowledged that both were correct.

Reunited, they drifted down one of the many channels of the Copper River delta, and past Alganik trading-post, where they found not a soul or a bite to eat. Here Jacobson examined several barrels that were empty, and one that he supposed was filled with water; but afterwards he was told that it was half-filled with salted salmon. Jacobson says that to this day, whenever he thinks about that incident, he goes and buys himself a mess of fish. In their attempt to reach Eyak, they drifted to sea, out around the cape, where their little craft was tossed and pitched by the ocean swells. Days passed, and it seemed that they would never arrive at Orca. A watery grave or starvation seemed inevitable. Again hunger suggested that they should eat Joe, their remaining dog, but one man pleaded that his life be spared for another day.

They were weakly pulling their oars near a wooded shore, when one of them announced that he espied an Indian in a canoe, not a mile away. They redoubled their efforts, and with frantic yells succeeded in attracting his attention. He proved to be a white man by the name of Hansen.

The appearance of these hatless, shoeless and ragged skeletons readily explained to Mr. Hansen their starving condition. He piloted them for a short distance to his cabin, where they were fed and shel-

tered until strong enough to proceed the short distance to Orca. When they parted company they gave Hansen \$150 in gold nuggets. They had fasted for ten and one-half days with \$10,000 in their belts. Al. Dowling unfortunately lost \$300 with his sleeping-bag in the rapids.

At the time of this writing, Joe Morris is in California, "Shorty" Fisher in Chicago, and Thompson in South America, while the rest, even to dog Joe, are still adding to their Alaskan experiences. Such were the trials subsequently related by several members of that party of adventurers.

I am constrained to believe that the nearer the body is to death, the more the mind wanders in the mysterious beyond, and possibly associates itself with those who have before departed from this life incarnate. The nightly recurrence of disagreeable dreams, when endeavoring to rest the tired body and weakened mind, are doleful reminiscences for those who are following the lonely and infelicitous life of daily trudging in rain and cold, when constantly exposed to danger.

I dream very seldom of the departed, when at rest in civilization, but when at the head-waters of the Shusitna River, I often have been annoyed with ghostly nocturnal companions. Others have complained of the same annoyance, and for an example, here is Bob Young's dream:

"I had been packing my outfit across a large gla-

cier's moraine," he said, "and was nearly exhausted from walking so much on the solid ice. At night I spread my sleeping-bag among some rocks, and soon was asleep amid those weird and desolate surroundings.

"I dreamed that I was back home, and that it was very dark when I opened the yard gate and stepped on the paved walk, so that it was necessary to step short and stamp my feet to follow it. As I neared the door I heard mother say, as plainly as I ever heard her in my life:

"'Father, are you asleep?'

"'No, what is it?' he answered.

"'I hear a cow walking on the lawn; better go out and drive her off.'

"He came to the door and opened it and exclaimed:

"'Why, mother! It is no cow! It is poor Bob, who has come home after walking on the glacier until he is all stiffened up!'

"I threw my arms about father and awoke to find myself yet on that old glacier, thousands of miles from home, and to realize that both my parents had been dead many years."

It may be that our superstitious faculties have more sway and work more freely at the times when we are most weak-minded. I remember that once I was successfully beaten by a palmist. I had given her a dollar to tell me something that I didn't know;



and at that time of my life I did not realize how easy that was to do. She filled her part of the agreement faithfully, by telling me that I was a married man and had two children. Now, if I *had* been married, it must have been when I was not in my right mind; although possibly most men are not in their right minds at the time they are married. I did not then, and do not now, regret paying that dollar, but I had not walked a block, trying to recall the circumstances of having done such a thing, when I paused, turned right about and foolishly returned and paid her another dollar to tell me where was my family. That apparently proves that one foolish action leads to the commission of another. The act of paying that last dollar is what I regret; not because I failed to find them, for I might have regretted it if I had, but because it illustrated the fact that when one starts down a weak-minded grade it is so difficult to stop suddenly.



## CHAPTER XXI

*The redbreasted robin is flittin' and bobbin'  
Because he is near ready to fly  
To the land that he knows is made green by the snows  
That are melting 'neath a clear blue sky.*

WE, the passengers of the steamer *Santa Ana*, enjoyed a ride on Prince William Sound, during the balmy days of the spring of 1902. Alaska's spring does not come "creeping," as described in our old school books, but with soft-footed fleetness, it laughingly bursts upon and overwhelmingly envelops you. "This is when daylight absorbs the night, and transforms it into balmy loveliness, and with arms affectionately entwined, wields a magic wand, while all Nature laughs in gleeful responsiveness."

The balm of Gilead buds its leaves, the devil club opens a beautiful sombrero above its base deceptions; the skeleton-looking alder on the hillside changes its color to that of a deep tangled wildwood, where broad leaves tremble in wild fandango to the soft music of the breeze. Blooming flowers among the green, chase the receding snow up the mountain sides to where the silvery fountains murmur applause, as they coquettishly glance down at you, far below.

On that summer's trip into the interior I fell into

company with several men, among whom were the Miles brothers, who were going in to photograph scenery, Indians and immense copper properties for Mr. Millard and others. The first day out, I attempted to knock off a horse's shoe with my jaw, and the effort put me to sleep for two hours, and fractured that part of my personal property. I subsisted on soup, while many incidents of the trail passed by as dim dreams.

We crossed the Copper River and spent several weeks camping at the base of Mt. Wrangell, puffing from its top great clouds of smoke and steam,—mostly steam. Once, with a powerful binocular I saw a considerable area that was bare of snow, on the west side of the mountain; and among the broken rock masses there spouted steam jets, or geysers. The Indians claim that this mountain was once much higher than at present and this is corroborated by its flat, level summit, and also by the fact that its height is to-day about 2000 feet lower than when first officially reported. The crater is a flattened area, about five or six miles across, and for months there is but a small barren area where the geysers spout.

I have seen great puffs of black smoke arise from it, indicating the falling-in of the sides to some great depth. It is reasonable to suppose that the mountain side would settle, as its interior was consumed.

We bartered with the Indians and photographed

them while they grunted and made faces at us; and camped on the bank of the Kuskalina River, where the colossal monument of Mount Blackburn was plainly visible. Here an anticline afforded so much interest to the prospector, with its lime and copper deposits, that I remained to prospect, and bade good-bye to the others, who proceeded on their way.

After prospecting a week I mounted my saddle-horse, and with the pack-horse following, started for the Nizina country. At the source of the Lakanaw River hundreds of mountain sheep were to be seen, like white specks clinging to dizzy heights. At Fourth-of-July Pass I ascended a mountain for the purpose of photographing a bear. After I had returned to camp, and had knocked a black gnat off of my eyebrow, I realized that I had failed because of her eagerness to place herself between me and her cubs, and because in doing so her actions had indicated that she intended to examine my kodak. With a snort of defiance, she came on with a rush, and I, accepting the challenge for a foot-race, left that vicinity in great haste. I had been three hours climbing up that mountain, and now descended it in three minutes. As I was hungry, and desired to return to camp anyway, it is probable that I broke the record in rapid mountain-descent. For a week I camped at the Big Springs, near the Kenekott glacier—a prong of the Wrangell system of glaciers, extending far back among the mountains. It was five

miles wide and continued that far below my camp. It would repay any admirer of sublimity capable of roughing it, to travel thousands of miles to see it, and when the railroad is built into the Bonanza copper mine, near by, it will be one of the greatest attractions for all northern tourists. It is a canyon filled with clear blue ice, and possesses yawning crevasses and frowning precipices.

With all this coldness so near, the weather was warm, the birds sang in the near-by trees, flowers bloomed and the horses fed on luxuriant bunch-grass. A few scattering spruce trees grew on the adjoining foot-hills, and high pinnacled mountains formed the background to the northwest, where variegated mineral ledges and dykes always will tantalize all prospectors who chance to camp in this picturesque locality. I prospected there, dug holes and returned to camp tired, but mentally interested and keen for the experiences of the morrow.

Just across that glacier was where Clarence Warner and "Arizona Jack" Smith discovered the greatest copper deposit ever naturally disclosed to the eyes of man. Seeing a green area high on the mountain, they climbed until nearly exhausted to reach it, and at last stood speechless when they found that patch of verdancy to be copper chalcocite and bornite—any prospector would have been speechless at such a discovery. They felt as if their minds had wandered to some mineralized fairy-land. Jack







*The "Bonanza" Copper Deposit.*

climbed to a pinnacle of copper and sat down upon it, to overlook the scene while recovering his speech. When it came to him he soliloquized:

"By all the mineral gods of these eternal hills, as this is the mother of all copper I christen her 'Bonanza'! And by the permission of the mineral god of the north, she shall ever reign supreme!"

When returning to camp Jack again regained his speech enough to say:

"Clarence, it's no use to look for *more* copper—  
*WE'VE FOUND IT ALL!*"

The photograph here submitted shows the man on the pinnacle and the Kenekott glacier five miles wide and 4000 feet below. The white shown on the ice at the right is snow that will, in that low altitude, melt off before the close of the summer.

Valuable property always is coveted by others, and more than \$100,000 was subsequently spent in defending the title to that discovery. I am creditably informed that the lowest expert report placed on ore in sight at that place was \$25,000,000 in value. This is but one of a hundred valuable copper deposits in that Chitina country. While these mountains are not so diversely mineralized as the Alaskan Range, yet it is a most wonderful copper country.

When the Indians gave that tributary of the Ahtna, known as Copper River, the name of Chitina, (Copper River in their language) they gave to American posterity a name that always will be familiar. I

believe if the copper deposits of this Chitina country were opened to the world's markets, and all other copper mines closed down, the demand for copper could be supplied by that part of Alaska alone. Owing to the exceedingly high value of the ore, which is mostly chalcocite, bornite and native copper, Chitina could furnish the metal at a figure that would allow of the plating of every ship bottom, and the roofing of every mansion with this valuable metal.

If it be not bottled up by a railroad company that is only interested in the development of its own properties, that country is destined to produce the bulk of the copper used. Its copper zone extends eastward through Wrangell mountains to White River and the White Horse countries; and westward to the coast and the islands of Prince William Sound, and along the Kenai and Alaska Peninsulas as far as Chignik Bay. While the ores of the coast are of a lower grade, generally being chalcopyrite, their accessibility admits of their rapid development.

Just below the Big Springs, I met "Arizona Jack," the discoverer of the Bonanza mine, and I requested him to point out its location.

"Thar she are," he replied, "just across the glacier thar! and by the eternal Pokie Moses, she hasn't moved an inch since I first found her!"

The trail descended alongside of the glacier, and then led up over morainic hills, above where the Kenekott River boils from beneath the glacier like





*Copper Nugget on Nugget Creek.*



an artesian well. Two more high summits were crossed; two more lonely camps were made; the Nizina River was forded and I was standing beside the rich sluice boxes of the Chititu (Copper water). This is a very good gold-placer camp.

From the source of the Nizina River, Rohn and McNear started, in 1899, on the reckless undertaking of crossing the Wrangell icefield—the most extensive in the north—over to the Tanana. For fifteen days they traveled and slept on ice, ate frozen food, suffered with snow blindness, and wandered among crevasses, accomplishing in the end one of the most daring feats ever undertaken.

The report of that journey was printed in the public document entitled, "The Copper River Exploring Expedition of 1899."

Sharp mountain peaks stick out of that icefield and on them can be found mountain sheep and ptarmigan. Its sixteen lobes of ice extend down to the valleys and form the sources of as many rivers.

For days I traveled alone, ate ptarmigan, and was often rain-chilled. On my return I again fell into company with the photographing party, and on Nugget Creek we were photographed beside a large nugget of pure copper metal that evidently weighed many tons.

## CHAPTER XXII

*My horses will be grazing in the twilight of the sun,  
And by the campfire's blazing, where the glacier rivers run,  
My tent ropes will be swinging, for I'll there unroll the  
pack,  
And listen to the singing of the white bird's call, "Come  
back!"*

ON my return, I separated from my companions again in order to travel and prospect alone. A cold, dismal and rainy night came on, and to avoid camping near some very repulsive-looking Indians, I made a forced march to another locality. I crawled on my hands and knees in the dark, feeling for the trail, as it was leading along a bluff, 1000 feet above the canyon, and by it I was to descend.

Unfortunately, one of the horses caved off an embankment and tumbled and rolled down about a hundred feet into a side-gulch. I turned one horse loose and spent some time descending to the other, which was found lying on his back in the bottom of the ravine. I rolled him further down, took off his pack and found that he had not even been scratched. It is remarkable how far a mustang will roll and tumble, with a pack beneath him for protection.

Spreading a "tarp" (canvas) over the packs, I unrolled my sleeping-bag and soon was ensconced comfortably therein, while it rained and the horses looked for feed. The next morning I discovered that I had slept on a ledge of copper ore. This has since been developed and sold to some New York purchasers.

A few days later, I left my camp, traveled over moss-covered ground, beneath shady forest trees, ascended above timber line, and at noon was on the summit of a high rocky ridge. From that place the horses, feeding near camp, looked like small specks, far below. Summer was kissing the northland its lingering farewell. While looking on the beautifully mottled picture of the valleys my attention was attracted to a near-by scene, across a defile, not a hundred yards away. There stood a big-horn sheep, but he quickly ascended a steep incline and passed over the ridge. Then a smaller one appeared in view, from around a sharp point, and attempted to follow; but a bullet from my automatic pistol broke his back and he rolled down on a shelf of rock. There was a fragrant odor arising from my camp, after that, and it was neither from spruce hen nor ptarmigan.

How cruel is man! I well remember killing my last antelope, an event which happened in California. It looked up, and its pleading eyes and its bleat for mercy at the finale caused me, then and there, to

resolve never to kill another antelope. This resolution has been sacredly observed.

Right here, let me make a statement about wild animals with a view to correcting a few false opinions that have been formed by books of fiction. The danger of man's being attacked by wild animals is not nearly so great as is generally believed. The ridiculous statements in regard to their furious disposition are as false generally as a recent fiction about a dog killing a bear. No dog that ever walked on legs could kill a full-grown wolverine, much less a bear.

In Alaska there are grizzly bears of various colors. The white tip ends of their long hair along the neck, shoulders and back gives them a silvery-tinged color, and consequently they are referred to as the "silvertip grizzlies." One writer has said that we have no grizzlies in Alaska, but that they are brown or cinnamon bears. Another says we have cinnamon, black, silvertips and grizzlies. To the experienced hunter that statement is positively ridiculous. The cinnamon brown and the blue and even the silvertip are the color distinctions applied to the grizzly bears. The glacier bear is not always blue, but frequently is of a creamy yellowish color. I never have seen the real brown species in Alaska, but believe it to be there, and am told by reliable hunters that it is to be found on the Southeastern Islands. All brown bears that I have killed were brown silvertipped

grizzlies. The grizzly bear has a hump on his shoulders,—at least it appears as such, but that is only the long hair and the height of his shoulder-blades. He has longer claws even when a little cub, than has the full-grown black bear. The American black bear will readily climb a tree, but a grizzly does not.

When the Pacific Coast grizzly is annoyed by mosquitoes he will fight a windmill, or even the great American, Mr. Roosevelt. A man who would take a cub from its live silvertipped grizzly mother would require a headboard inscription to tell his friends about it. I have seen a bear with one brown and one black cub, and both were grizzlies. There are many American black bears along Alaska's coast, and they are harmless.

To the long-clawed, blunt-nosed, humpbacked, silvertipped grizzly I take off my hat, or jump from under it. He is a king among beasts. He may run away to-day, and fight to-morrow, as he is governed by moods. Like all semi-carnivorous animals, even man, he is more disagreeable when eating meat than at other times. One should not rush too suddenly upon a bear that is eating fish, nor should one ever go between a grizzly bear and her cubs.

A bear will not lie in wait in a cowardly manner, but squarely meets an opponent and, unless first badly enraged by having been hurt, he never touches an enemy after knocking him senseless. Of course, a very few exceptions may be admitted, as we are in-



clined to generalize too much instead of individualizing when describing wild animals.

The bear is the most honorable fighter among wild animals, and experienced hunters entertain respect for him because of these principles. It is reasonable to suppose that the disposition of wild animals would change when in captivity. The practice of telling children that bears will eat them is as ridiculous as it is false, for they do not eat human beings. I have awakened in the morning and found near my bed their tracks that had been made during the night, but as not one in one thousand would disturb a man when asleep I thought nothing of it. The Pacific Coast grizzly, that has roamed from Mexico to Alaska, often measures more than twelve feet long, and is much larger and more dangerous than the little Rocky Mountain grizzly.

Mr. Grant Chase, who now lives in Seattle, has killed a great many of both kinds of bears, and his list includes an Alaska grizzly that measured nearly 14 feet from tip of nose to tip of tail. That bear was as large probably as two full-grown Rocky Mountain grizzlies. I have heard of bears that measured more than 14 feet in length. The picture here represents a photograph of a skin from one that was 12 feet long and weighed 1200 pounds without the blood. This was taken in the camp of L. L. Bales, on Alaska Peninsula, and affadavits as to the weight of that bear can be obtained. Mr. Bales



*Skin of Alaskan Grizzly.*



claims that the condition of the bear could have easily been improved to the weight of 1600 pounds, as he was not fat when weighed.

There appear to be two distinct kinds of grizzlies; one with a long and straight head and the other with a shorter but wider head, and with a depression below the eyes. Owing to the fact that these latter root or dig with their noses after chauce root, they have the nose very blunt sometimes, and therefore the hunters refer to them as the "Hog-nosed" grizzlies.

That kind of a grizzly, when met with, ignorant of the consequences of an encounter with a white man and his improved guns, is very dangerous. It is probable that no less than 100 men have been killed by the Pacific Coast grizzly during the last fifty years.

Writers of fiction have given out a false education and have caused many pitiable cowards. I have known men, old enough to know better, remain awake all night because of the howling of wolves near by. Wolves are afraid of man. Once I found the body of a man who had been dead for weeks, where wolves had beaten a trail around the body, and although the shredded clothing indicated that they had snapped that close, yet the body was unharmed.

I have shot a wolf from my bed upon awakening in the morning. With revolver in hand, I have ap-

proached, by the light of the moon, near to where their howling sounded as if there were a baker's dozen of them. Although I ran short distances, and acted as if I were afraid of them, I could not persuade one of them to come nearer to me than twenty steps, and those were Alaska gray wolves, too.

No doubt hungry wolves have followed people for the food they were carrying, and those people have fully believed that they were after their persons. It is very probable that the peasants of Russia, who had no other weapons but whips and firebrands, did train many packs of wolves to follow them in that way, and, of course, any lone traveler would have been in danger from those particular packs. Naturally, the more wolves there are together, the more courageous they become, and there is real danger from very large and hungry packs.

Wolves do worry the large animals, however, and they weaken moose by not allowing them to eat, until by the aid of starvation they are enabled to cut their hamstrings and let them down, when the killing of the moose is easily accomplished.

A mountain lion, or any of the panther species, will not prowl too near a man, even at night-time. They will come within thirty or forty steps of one, if there be fresh meat at that place, and I have heard them snarling when gnawing bones that near to camp. There is positively no danger to grown men from panther or lynx unless when they are defend-



ing themselves or their kittens. Women or children may be attacked by them. A lynx sprang upon a woman who was in a milking corral near San Diego, Cal., in 1869. One of Mr. Balanger's daughters was in like manner attacked while milking a cow in San Luis, Obispo County, California, in 1884. Mrs. Julia Holloway, now living near Bakersfield, in that State, was attacked by a small lynx, or bob-cat, and managed to beat it to death with a rock, after being badly bitten and scratched. The lynx is much braver than the panther, although he is smaller.

It is probable that I have kicked one hundred lynx out of trees to be killed by dogs. Sometimes, if you are climbing up directly under one, he may jump on you, but only after giving you warning by growling. I have seen one large lynx whip six dogs to a standstill, but that was because the dogs knew not how to kill a lynx. After he had done that, my little black-and-tan hound, although much smaller than the lynx, bravely walked in and had the lynx kicking his last within a minute of time.

While I am describing wild animals, I will say a word about the fox. Eastern hunters will laugh at any one who says a fox will climb a tree. That is because the eastern fox does not climb trees.

The California fox climbs trees, and this fact cannot be denied. Even after I had killed many foxes, I thought that they only managed to ascend the trees by jumping from limb to limb, but afterwards I

found that my hounds put them up trees that were straight, and that they climbed forty feet from the ground before they found a limb on which to rest.

The wolverine is the most peculiar animal of all. When he desires to be, he is just as sly and cunning as the panther, yet, when emboldened by eating meat, he appears oblivious to danger, and will stand by the side of a dead animal's carcass and growl, while a man walks within a few steps of him. He is remarkably vicious and puts up a very bad fight when cornered. He can whip a whole pack of wolves, and it has been said, and I believe it, that he can whip the little American black bear.

A peculiar incident happened here in my camp, and as it refers to a wolverine, I will here relate it. I had thrown the neck of the sheep on the ground, but a few paces from the foot of my bed, and retired to sleep with my head much higher than my feet, so as to command a good view of my surroundings. Unfortunately, I was traveling without a dog, as I had sent little Pete down to California. This no one should do when fronttering alone, as a dog is a very useful companion.

When awakening the next morning, what should I see standing at the foot of my bed but a wolverine. He was showing his white teeth, looking at me, and with his long red tongue licking his chops in what I construed to be a menacing attitude. As his large vicious-looking yellow eyes gazed squarely into mine,

instinctively I closed my hand upon my bedfellow friend, the pistol, and slowly raised it until the sights passed up between the nostrils, then followed up to the brain. Immediately there was a report and a dead wolverine in camp.

For some time I lay there trying mentally to solve the mystery, and finally succeeded. It was evident that he was not thrusting out his tongue and showing his white teeth as a hostile demonstration towards me because I had awakened, as first I was led to suppose, but because he had just been tearing the meat from the sheep-neck near by, and was then contemplating an attempt to secure some more meat, which was hanging to a limb near my head. It was the taste of meat and his eagerness for more that had caused his boldness. Whatever may have been his peaceable intentions, his attitude, his wicked yellow eyes, his white teeth and his long red tongue, had all contributed to emphasize one of the scenes that I shall never forget.

The horses gave their bells an extra rattle, about two hundred yards from camp, then they could be heard approaching. Horses that have been used for hunting take a human-like interest in such things, and show inquisitiveness. When they arrived in camp, the smell of the wolverine made them so restless that they were saddled with difficulty.

After breakfast, I mounted my saddle-horse and with pack-horse following, proceeded on my way.

About two miles from there I met two Indian squaws, and when they were told where they could find a dead wolverine, they hurried on with the prospect of obtaining the skin. The Indians place a high value on the skin of the wolverine, as they claim that it is the only fur on which the breath will not freeze. With it, they border-fringe the parkie, where it is worn near the face.

Upon arriving on the bank of the Copper, the wind was blowing harder than I had ever experienced it in that country. It was a long time before I could attract the attention of the Indians on the other side of the river, as they could not hear the firing of a gun so far across the wind and water. Finally they came down to the bank, launched a canoe, and in a short time the horses were swimming for the other shore, and we were paddling in pursuit.

I found a cabin in which I was sheltered for two days, while the wind blew trees down near by. Old Doctor Bellum, an Indian doctor, came in and entertained me for hours, narrating interesting details about his people's traditions and superstitions. He told of the war with the Tananas; how one night the Tananas quietly came down the river, and at daylight disclosing themselves in battle array, began firing on the Ahtnas. They killed about forty of the Copper River Indians, but the remainder retreated to the wood, deployed in the mountain passes, and killed thirty of the Tananas on their return.

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He said the breath of Mount Wrangell (Unalletta) was poison; that the smoke from its crater once descended and killed several Indians when they were sitting around their campfire, near the mouth of the Tulsona, and that the Indians had accused him of causing the catastrophe. He employed Unalletta's smoke, he said, as a threat to control bad characters; and he informed me that Chief Nicoli had once sent six Indians up to examine the crater. That had happened "eleven snows yesterday" (1891), and they had not yet returned, but "may-be-so some time come back." Four others had gone in search of the six, and two of them, while looking over into the crater, had fallen dead from the effects of the poison they had breathed. Then he talked of the superstition of the Indians, and said they believed that he could look right through them and discover their wickedness.

Presently another tall Indian came in and introduced himself as Eselota, whereupon Bellum modestly retired, possibly because he knew Eselota was somewhat of a liar himself. As Eselota wore a long beard and had the features of a white man, he was asked if he were not partly Russian. He seemed to entertain doubts, unless his people had come from Russia long before the other Russians had known of the country. He said his people, the Suslotas, were all as tall as he, and wore long beards. Twenty-four Russians, he declared, had once ascended the



Copper River on the ice. They were so abusive that the Indians had been compelled to kill them in their camp, near the mouth of the Tazlina River. They had knocked the Russians in the head with rocks, while they were asleep, but had let two of them escape to tell the others, so that the Russians never again would molest the tribe.

This statement was corroborated by an old Russian who claimed that he was one of the two men who had been released. This old man died recently at Tatetlik.

Those Indians seemed very much attached to their 3000 acres tract of river-bottom land, and the government should protect them in their ownership of it. Their little homes and sacred graveyards should be insured against the white invaders who are disposed to divest them too often, not only of their property rights, but also of their morals.

When I rode up the trail that ascended the escarp of the river's deep channel, I paused and looked back on that almost unknown little valley and wondered if those clay banks could talk, what stories of life, romance and death they could relate.

That summer had been an unlucky one for I had arranged to accompany the Indian, Gokona Charley, to a great copper deposit. He had failed to appear the year before, because of sickness in his family, but as they had all died, he was now left alone to disclose the secret. He was willing to do so on con-

dition that if it were worth it to me, I should take him out of the Copper River country, so that he would never see it again. We were to meet on August 1, but on the way to our appointed rendezvous, he was drowned in the Tazlina River, on July 28. The secret was lost, and so was an Indian friend whom I had known for four years.

I had often noted his tracks and those of his family as they moved from one hunting-ground to another, and had seen their abandoned camps, where in their all-too-brief period of childish happiness, his little ones had built playhouses (wickiups). Charley had watched his children die, one at a time, and then had seen his wife succumb to consumption. With loving hands he had laid her to rest beside their children, and with tearful eyes had followed the lonely trail leading away from their decorated graves, never to return.

The great Mongol Emperor, Shah Jehan, of India, erected the Taj Mahal, the most costly bejeweled tomb on the globe, to the memory of his beloved wife, Queen Muntazi Mahal. He did all that he could to express his grief, yet he did no more than did poor Gokona Charley, for he, too, did the best he could.

Several persons lost their lives exploring that summer: Thos. Conally was drowned in the Kotsina River; Horace Tuffin and Mr. Riley had been frozen

to death during the previous winter, and a few were drowned in the Chitina.

One day I heard shooting at intervals a short distance ahead, and presently saw seven rabbits hanging to a tree. Those Rocky Mountain snowshoe rabbits were quite plentiful, but an Indian could kill a dozen of them while an average white man was killing one. Stealthily following, I soon came upon an old Indian, with a boy walking behind and dragging two rabbits by the heels. Presently, as the old Indian approached a patch of brush, he stopped and began to make a peculiar noise! then bang! went the gun and over tumbled a rabbit. As I came up, I laughingly said that I knew how it was that an Indian could kill more rabbits than a white man. He replied:

"White man, he no sabe how to call 'em. Me know how to talk rabbit-talk."

The trail, on my return, was lined with stampededers for the Nizina country, who made their poor horses carry packs as far as they were able to go, and then shot them or left them to starve. I found one exhausted horse lying in the trail in such a place that it was necessary to shoot him in order to pass by. While he struggled in death his body went rolling and tumbling down one hundred feet into the Tekeil River.

The Geological Survey boys that season had about

finished up their work in that part of the country. Too much credit cannot be given to Schrader, Brooks, Mendenhall and others for their industry in mapping the land; and to M. P. Ritter and others of the Geodetic Survey for their diligence in charting the waters of our northern possessions.

## CHAPTER XXIII

*A philosophical Indian once described the world as an animal, vegetation as hair, all living things as vermin, and a volcano as a "sore place."*

THOSE Indians, commonly called Sticks, should bear their original name of Ahtna. Their name of Stick was evidently derived from the English word stick, which they apply to forests, trees and logs, and the definition of the name, as applied to them, is "Woodsmen." Sub-chief Stickman derived his name from the fact that he built a log cabin in which to live, in preference to the uncomfortable tepee.

Their real, or former, name was Ahtna, but whether or not they are related to the Ahtnas of the upper Frazer River, and the Apaches of Arizona, who possess a part of their vocabulary, probably never will be known.

These Indians will steal only when driven to it by starvation. Like all Indians, they were better before the whites discovered them than after they have accepted the white man's vices and rejected his virtues. Their deplorable condition seems to be the result of natural inclination.

An old Indian seemed very much disappointed when he was informed that the military would not



employ Indians to work on the trail. He said he preferred that the Indians should work for what they got, rather than to obtain it by begging. A few Indians earned a livelihood by running ferries across the rivers, but white men secured licenses for that privilege and took the industry away from them.

An old Indian once explained to me that his father had lived and died on the spot he was then occupying, and there he intended to live and die. Six months after that some white men took possession of his sacred spot and drove him farther up the river. It is the same old story of the white man's injustice to the Indian—a story which should bring the blush of shame to all Americans. When those Indians discover that they are discriminated against, they become discouraged, mean and sullen. Intellectually, the Copper River Indians are superior to any other Indians I have ever met. They are quick to learn, and are naturally musical and also humorous.

While an Indian's humor is of a quiet and grim sort, it often means much. Once a companion of mine was fooling with a crowd of them, and playing a few of his many tricks. He had a sewing machine bobbin and around it he had wound about thirty feet of silk ribbon. He placed this spool in his mouth when unobserved, and began to pull out the ribbon, an inch at a time. The Indians swarmed around as he slowly unwound it, until he had piled

up about twenty feet of ribbon, when one of the Indians approached me and said:

"Say, you come look see! White man hiyu' (very) sick!"

"No, he no sick," I replied.

"You say he ha-lo (not) sick?" he asked.

"Yes, he ha-lo sick," I answered.

"All right, he ha-lo sick, by and by he make 'em blanket!" replied the Indian, as he solemnly rejoined the spectators.

These Indians dig a wild parsnip root they call "chauce," and it is their only farinacious diet. Often during the long winters they consume all their supplies of "chauce" and dried salmon, and are then compelled to subsist on the inner bark of trees, the juices of which they swallow. It may be that this is the prime cause of the black vomit which, they claim, has killed off so many of them during the last fifty years. The last appearance of that disease was among the Indians at the source of the White River. It was always fatal, causing a destruction of the mucous membrane of the stomach. However, their having eaten the inner bark of trees may not have been the cause of the black vomit, as that custom has been general among all Indians throughout the timbered regions in the United States. It is more probable that it was caused by the sudden change in springtime, from starvation to a period of gormandizing.

An Indian will not give anything to another's wife, not even something to eat; that is, he would not directly do so, but he might pass the article to a child to hand to the squaw, because the child is innocent. He believes that if he gave her anything directly, the action would bring down on him a spell of sickness, or that some harm would befall him.

In more ancient times, their marriage ceremonies were accompanied with a feast given by the bride's parents, when the bridegroom presented them with all he could afford, to show to them his appreciation of their daughter. When the custom is now observed, the groom sings a verse of a song after the feast, pleading with the girl to go with him, as he has stored ample provisions for the coming winter, and is strong and willing to hunt, and to care for her when she is old.

The girl then sings a song wherein she announces her parental love and her content with her existing conditions. Then he answers that his canoe is moored to the river bank, and if she had come with him their trip on the water would have represented their life together; but as she has refused, he will go down the river alone, and in his wickiup moan for the one he loves.

He bids them good-bye and before he unties his canoe, he generally finds that she has followed him,

and in the moonlight, their friends from the shore watch the two paddle down the river together.

Like some white women, the squaws wear rings in their ears, and often go their white sisters one better by wearing them in their noses.

At one moment these Indians surprise you with their cleanliness by their regular bathing habits, and the next astonish you with their filthy ways. They carry a cud of tobacco in a little tin box. They will take this out and chew it for a few minutes, and then, if near a fire, they will roll it in the ashes and replace it in the box to absorb lye and strength for future use. Often this cud is passed around to others who may be present, but after they have, in turn, chewed the morsel, it is returned to the owner. An Indian child will beg for tobacco with as much persistency as a white child for candy. It is really from the Indian that we learned our tobacco habits.

An Indian seldom has a plurality of wives, and when he does, he apologetically explains that the last one was formerly a wife of some friend who died, and that he took her to support until she had found another husband; but the fact is, she is generally the one who does the supporting.

When these Indians break up camp to go on a hunt, or to some trading-post, they indicate how many persons have departed and the course that they took by sticking a pole in the ground for each person, and leaning it in the direction he has gone.

To each pole is attached a remnant of some masculine or feminine wearing apparel to indicate the sex of the person it represents. Age is indicated by the length of the pole.

A cache post, or the surface of an old tree near by, may be found marked with charcoal, or a lead pencil, if they should be fortunate enough to have one, bearing such a diagram as the following:



This would mean that a man with a gun, a squaw, a little girl and a dog had left the bank of the river, when the moon was half full; that their first day's travel will terminate on the bank of a creek, where they will camp on the near shore; that their next day's travel will terminate on the bank of another creek where they will camp on the opposite shore; and that at noon of the next day, they will make their final camp at the foot of the mountain.

These leaning sticks are generally left at every camping place along their trail, for the edification of other Indians. This explains what puzzles many white men, and that is: how the Indians are so well-informed about the movements of parties of white men as well as of Indians. If an Indian were in your camp, and knew of your number, it is proba-



ble, if afterwards you secreted yourself near your old camp, that you would find the Indians placing some mysterious stick in the ground near the camp or your trail.

The Indian maiden, when approaching maturity, is ostracised as an unclean thing. She is then compelled to wander alone, and obtain her own living in the best possible way. Edibles are occasionally left where she can find them, but nothing is given directly to her. She is not allowed to accept anything from the hands of another, and must cook everything she eats. This brutal custom of driving the poor girls out in inclement weather is shocking.

One of the old customs of these Indians, when approaching another's camp, was to fire as many shots as there were numbers in their party. In those days, when they had muzzle-loading rifles, it indicated that their guns were unloaded and they were peaceable. Owing to the white man's disregard for those signals, and his refusal to answer them, the custom is now about obsolete.

The moccasin of the Tananas has a square heel-tip that leaves its impression in the track; the Copper River Indian moccasins have two, and the moccasin of the Shusitnas has none. By the tracks of the Indians, they can tell to what tribe they belong. The interior Indians plainly articulate their words, and their language is easily learned, as they name animals and birds by the noises that they make.

They name sheep "tobah"; goat, "tobay"; wild geese, "honk, honk," and the little red squirrel "klinket."

They show respect for the dead by fencing in their graves and placing crudely constructed crosses over them. Articles that were once the property of the deceased, and little playthings of the children, are placed on the graves as tokens of respect and lingering affection. The old squaws occasionally wail for the dead, just as the Digger squaws used regularly to do in southern climes, where I heard them when a boy. Their wailing was a regular occurrence between sundown and dark, and created a lonely feeling in me that reasserted itself when the occasional moan was heard away up there on Copper River.

One evening I had seated myself on the grass-covered ground, near a large boulder, on the bank of that river to enjoy an after-supper smoke. The river boiled, curled and murmured, only about twenty feet below. The last rays of the summer's sun were kissing the tips of the mountains a lingering good-night. Soon, from far away down the river, was heard that lonesome wail, which has probably gone up from that river-bottom for a thousand years, but here, as in other places, it is nearing its last echo. To me it came with a poignant suggestion of my vanished boyhood.

Suddenly a grunt from an Indian was heard, only

a few feet away, and looking round, I discovered one of the most intelligent of his race. I invited him to sit down, whereupon I handed him an extra clay pipe, a package of tobacco and a bunch of sulphur matches. Sulphur matches are the only kind the hunter will carry, for the wet ones can be dried readily by giving them a few strokes through the hair, and can then be lighted. That is why they are so popular in the west.

When he had filled the pipe, he offered to return the tobacco and matches, but the offer was refused. That wail had put us upon the natural level of comradeship; and the tobacco was accomplishing its share. I desired that he should talk and impart information about himself and his people. One must give an Indian time to commence to do that, even under favorable conditions, and it was hoped that the gift of tobacco would be conducive to that end.

The old Indian had smoked but a few puffs, when he laughingly compared the smoke of his pipe to that of the Unaletta volcano which was in plain view. He asked about the Indians away off in the white man's country, and appeared to be surprised when he was told that the Indians and whites lived in the same vicinity. He said he thought the Indians were all dying off to make room for the white man. He informed me that once there were 1500 Indians between Tonsina River and Copper Center, a distance of about twenty miles, but that now there

were less than one hundred. Formerly they could kill a moose whenever they wanted it, while now there were very few of them to be found.

He was a fatalist, and believed it was the destined plan of the Great Power that the Indians should give way for the whites. He said he could "feel it." To explain his position as a fatalist, he assured me that if we could have looked ahead correctly a year before, we should have seen ourselves sitting by that rock at this time. He said if we could look ahead, we could tell when earthquakes would occur; that if we could look into the future we could see the little babe grow up, follow its wanderings until its death, and then, if we watched the child's life, that it would be just as we had seen it—it would die just the same way, and no human power could change it. The individual might *think* he could do as he pleased, but he was only doing what was predestined for him to do, and he could not help it.

That untutored savage could have entertained our civilized philosophers, but he would certainly have collided with some of the modern free-moral-agent theories.

He described how his people once had made axes out of stone, then later out of native copper. He said that they could harden copper fairly well with an application of urinal ammonia, but the process was tedious, and moreover the ax was not as serviceable as the white man's steel.



He explained that the Indians were compelled to hunt for a living and had not the time to improve themselves like the white people, but he wished they could read and write. He said that the children would learn to do so, if the Great Power so destined it. All Indians believe in an occult power. He thought that his people once had occupied the whole land, but the fish-eating Siwashes had come and driven them back from the coast. He could understand the language of the Tananas, Shusitnas and the Yukons, as their languages were similar to his own. It is reported by explorers in the Hudson Bay country that the Indians up there talk the same language, or nearly so, and it is possible that this old fellow's conclusions were correct. He had traveled some, and said he had been over twice to the Yukon country, and had seen the Japanese there.

"Jap, may-be-so he my cousin!" he added.

He told me of his tribe's superstitions and laughed at their foolishness, the same as the white men laugh at lucky horseshoes, and four-leaved clover. He explained how the squaws made charms with beads and ptarmigan wing-bones, to wear when going on a dangerous canoe voyage. These they call "ha-lo calepie," which, when literally translated, means "no upset." The Indian sweat-baths he informed me were a sure cure for rheumatism.

He said the ptarmigan sometimes increase to such



numbers that the country was unable to support them, and that at such times they would fly away to other localities. This statement is supported by the fact that those birds once flew across the Yukon River in such great numbers that a steamboat's passengers were enabled to kill them with clubs. He said that rabbits also increased too rapidly for their sustenance, and that then they would die off. He denied that they died at definite periods, and ridiculed the saying that rabbits die off every seven years as a silly tradition of the squaws.

I asked him why it was that so many of the Indians of the Pacific coast buried their dead facing the setting sun, as I had noticed that custom along the coast as far south as Mexico.

"Me no sabe," he answered. "May-be-so one time all Indians' home that way, and when Indians die they look back to old home."

There, that was a statement worth something. Then the old Indian rested his head on his hands, as if in deep reminiscent thought. If he were now living a reincarnated life of his ancestors, what a history he could tell of battles, hardships and death which had accompanied their immigration into that country! When he resumed, it was not of the past, but of the future. He arose and stood in a commanding attitude, and motioning his hand from west to east, exclaimed:

"Indians come!"

Motioning from east to west he continued:

"White man come!"

Then in apparent exultation and great joy he waved both hands in the air and exclaimed:

"Bye-and-bye, all Indians come back—all come back! White man die."

I never shall forget the apparently inspired expression of his countenance when he made that prophecy. There is really no yellow race, but the red race in Japan, China, Korea and Siberia numbers nearly 500,000,000, and there is no race suicide there. The reward of conquest over a weak, wealthy, but intelligent nation, which may be the final destiny of this, would be so great, with the accumulated wealth in the hands of a few, that resistance to temptation may be discontinued, and instead of China being dismembered for spoils, history may repeat itself, and in the words of this old Indian:

"Bye-and-bye, all Indians come back!"

Such were my thoughts as the old Indian sat smoking his pipe. When he saw that I had recovered from the reverie, he announced that he was not superstitious, and for an Indian he was an exception, yet even he related how the spirits went with the winds and made nocturnal visits to their old hunting-grounds.

Then the lone wail was heard again from away down the river, and that interesting child of the forest said "Chinan," (thanks) for the pipe and tobacco, bade good-bye and silently made moccasin tracks down the trail.

## CHAPTER XXIV

*When on the trails as brothers they have fought the rapids'  
wrath;*

*They've heard the wails of others as they fell beside the path;  
They've danced with death a-swinging, as they climbed the  
mountains high;*

*Where north winds were a-singing they'll as brothers live  
and die.*

I SPENT the summer of 1904 on the head-waters of the Tanana River, and it was an outing in the fullest sense of the term. Except my companion, I saw no human being for three months. I hung up my broad-rimmed white hat, when on Jack Creek, and dug from my clothesbag a black, narrow-rimmed misnomer. I did that because four years before, while wearing a similar broad-rimmed hat in this vicinity, I had been chased and nearly caught by an enraged grizzly, and if we should meet again there was danger of being recognized by him, if seen wearing the same kind of headgear.

I was fortunate in having an interesting conversationalist for a companion. That is a happy faculty, whether natural or cultivated. I have known persons who had so diligently cultivated that trait that they could distinctly say the words "yes" and "no,"

and I always enjoyed looking at their backs as they departed.

My companion was a very agreeable fellow as well as an humorous one. He wore a red bandanna handkerchief around his neck, red whiskers on his chin, red freckles on his nose and red hair on his head. He said he was naturally a born leader of men, when they were on a retreat. He claimed that self preservation was one of the cardinal traits of his character. I was perfectly satisfied to risk myself with him in the wilds, and that is where one should have a man on whom one can depend.

I ascended a mountain to locate the noonday resting-place of some mountain sheep, and a few were seen, but too far away to secure any that late in the day. On the way back, in a wide canyon, I met three full-grown grizzlies, and bravely placed myself in seclusion while they passed to my windward. Of course I was not the least bit embarrassed, but while counting my five rounds of ammunition, I counted three cartridges and five bears. It would be cruel to separate the bears by killing only a few of them; besides, there might be bears right in camp at that moment destroying things. I resolved to go right there and defend that camp with my life, if necessary. It is some consolation to me, even at this day, to know those bears never saw me.

My companion, Mr. Howard, about 11 P. M., came walking up the creek bottom looking for me,



and among the willows we nearly ran against each other. The next day, he, armed with a 30-30 rifle and I with a pistol, returned up the mountain and succeeded in placing ourselves in front of some mountain goats. While in a deep gorge, an old Billy with his whiskers "gave a sly glance at me," from the side of a precipice. In endeavoring to draw a white bead on a white goat, with a white cloudy skyline for a background, he was missed at no greater distance than sixty yards. At that time, my partner was busily engaged in holding a dog (not Pete), which was possessed with a delusion that he could chase all mountain goats out of Alaska. We succeeded in killing two, which was all the meat we wanted at that time. It was a sight to see one of those I shot, after he had climbed to a great height, then to come tumbling down. It is little trouble to get within range of mountain sheep and goat if one be skilled in hunting them. It is the novice, killing for sport, who climbs, sweats, and worries and declares that they are always inaccessible. What fun the sheep do have with those fellows!

About a month later, when riding along a sheep trail on a steep mountain-side, I rounded a sharp point and met a large female grizzly. She stood up on her hind feet and appeared interested, while that horse proceeded to exhibit his athletic abilities for her amusement and my discomfort. I tightly held the horse while he turned round and round, on

that high, narrow trail. He did this about one hundred times, which enabled me to count as many bears. Of course this is a rough estimate, but one should be conservative when telling of bears. Before there was time to pass the hat, the audience left, the horse ceased performing, and his rider began to dimly realize that he had been turned around so many times it was with difficulty he could determine the direction to camp. He felt satisfied, however, that he owned the greatest trick horse that had ever performed before an Alaskan audience.

Others, that summer, did not have such agreeable experiences with bears. Some prospectors on the Tanana found the dead body of a man near the foot of a tree, and in his hand was the following note:

"To folks at home. I have met my fate. Good-bye and may God care for and bless you all. Was hunting and wounded bear. It has killed me. Good-bye,

"ALONZO CHESWITH."

At one time we were camped on the trail that leads from Mentasta to Bachulneta by way of Suslota, when a coyote appeared near by, then another, and they all carried packs. That was sufficient reason for suggesting the advisability of placing the coffee-pot on the fire to assist in making a bluff at feeding Indians, for they were sure to be there. In a few minutes, our camp was alive with vermin and In-

dians, while dogs whined to be unpacked, squaws begged for food, and men for tobacco. After two hours' rest, they left as they had come, in a straggling manner, probably one hundred yards apart.

The next night, about two o'clock in the morning, we heard the call of a night-bird, apparently near by; this was answered over on another hill, and that indicated the oft-heard signal of the Tananas. I quietly slipped out in the dark and listened, and again it was heard, farther away, and this time it was answered from along the trail; so it was plainly an Indian call, and not that of a night-bird of the feathered kind.

Those Indians had done right in going around the camp of the white man, for a tenderfoot might have shot an Indian at that time of night, if he had discovered him near his camp;—there is always an uncanny feeling that passes through one's anatomy when that call is heard.

The next day we passed Indian Albert on the trail, and after satisfying his request for tobacco, we continued on our way and presently heard the same bird-call from a thicket, two hundred yards to one side. Before I had recovered from the amusement of a night-bird calling at mid-day, the answer was heard from Albert, away down the trail. The first was not intended for the white man's ears, and in that case, no doubt, emanated from Albert's bodyguard.



*An Indian Pack-Train.*





If, when camping among those forest denizens, you happen to explain to a tenderfoot companion that these calls, or plaintive tremolos, which sound from the dark recesses of night, are aboriginal signals, then that tenderfoot needs a sedative for his nerves. You will not be annoyed by his snoring during the rest of that night. He may previously have been the embodiment of inanition, but the spell will be forever broken while on the trail, and henceforth, when in the wilds at night, he will ever be on the alert, and his stare into darkness will indicate nurtured animation, apparently conserved for that particular occasion.

A young Indian approached our camp, on Chickamen Creek, carrying a twenty-pound pack, and supporting besides the ponderous cognomen of "Bob." With inimitable gestures he assured us that he knew of a dry trail leading to Mentasta, which avoided the bosky swamp country of the Slahna bottoms, with their innumerable muskrat ponds, lakes and sloughs. In consideration of his services as guide, we consented to carry his pack on a horse, and also recklessly attempted to satisfy his omnivorous appetite from our commissariat. His boasted knowledge of the way proved so unreliable that the final result was a halt in the midst of a swamp. While one man smoked the mosquitoes from the poor horses, I looked along the edge of the mountain for solid footing, and the Indian searched towards the

river. When the Indian returned from his futile search, he answered our queries with an impotent gesture, spreading his fingers, and profanely qualified his statement thus:

"Trail no good! May-be-so good for salmon, dat's all!"

We swam our horses across an outlet of a lake, and took them where one would think it impossible to go. As night approached, we came out on the green flat at the outlet of the Mentasta lake, where was the village of Chief John and his tribe. While preparing camp, we were surrounded by Indians of all sizes and descriptions, and, as usual, they begged for "tobac." The old chief "pot-latched" us five white fish, fresh from the lake. That senile chief, who was broad-shouldered, slim-legged and dressed in buckskin, extended this courtesy—not with benevolence as an incentive, but to obligate us to return the favor as many times as our patience would permit.

My companion was droll as well as congenial. He remarked that he believed he could walk across a creek on a log, but while attempting it he fell into the water up to his neck, whereupon he added: "I've changed my mind!"

He possessed the happy trait of never becoming bewildered. It is very trying to travel in a wild country with a companion who is constantly getting lost. The majority of those who lose their lives do

so by first losing their desired direction. A member of a party with which I was traveling once in the Copper River country had no sense of direction, because he was born that way—it is a natural failing—and was lost almost constantly. He would feel lost, probably, if enclosed in a corral. There was but one smoking mountain to be seen, but he found dozens of them. Whenever he saw that mountain from a new position, immediately he recorded the discovery of another volcano. We humored this fellow, who was otherwise intellectually bright, by asking for a description of the last volcano, hoping he would discover that there was merely one, but it made no difference to him, for he continued to discover more smoking mountains with the evident purpose of breaking the record in that particular line.

We rested one day on Indian Creek, and during the afternoon I took a walk down on the bottom, in search of a mess of spruce hens, thinking they might be found among the heavy timber. Instead of taking a pistol that was large enough to kill anything I might happen to see, a small automatic 32 was picked up. I had gone but a quarter of a mile when I got a glimpse of a brownish-looking animal and decided that it was a yearling moose.

A yearling moose was about our desired size, so, instead of returning for a larger pistol, I decided to crawl through the brushy undergrowth, as near as possible to the place where the animal stood, and

then slip a few bullets into the heart cavity and get my moose by tracking him a short distance.

The moss-covered ground enabled me to arrive at the place unobserved, but when there, as I arose and looked around, not a thing could I see. Because the wind had been in my favor I was satisfied that the animal had not been frightened, but where it had vanished was a mystery. I stood beside a large tree, so as to be less likely to be observed, and was quietly waiting for the hunted one to make a move, for I was not entirely sure that it was a moose.

Presently, a large brown silvertip grizzly bear arose from lying flat on the ground, not thirty paces distant. He sat up on his haunches and scented in the direction of camp, and while doing so, he quietly held the butt of his ear for me. At that moment, the idiotic strain which runs through my composition asserted itself, and I could not resist the temptation to satisfy my curiosity in regard to what effect that little hard bullet would have upon him.

The missile was properly despatched to the exact spot, at the butt of his ear! Then, shaking his head and emitting a savage growl he rushed towards me, on his back track, like a whirlwind. I dropped to the ground like a dead 'possum—and dared not move, for any attempt to climb the tree would have been disastrous. At the rate I was shrinking up, I could have disappeared into a squirrel hole in a

few minutes, but it was only a few seconds before he had passed within a few feet of me, and the way the brush popped, one would have thought it a six-horse team running away with a wagon-load of loose poles. If an inexperienced tenderfoot had committed that foolish act, he might, after proper treatment, have been pronounced harmlessly sane; but as for myself, I returned to camp with a profound feeling that my case was hopeless.

On our return, we saw matured oats and barley at the United States Experimental farm at Copper Center, and also a vegetable garden at Tonsina River.

There are thousands of acres along the river bottoms of the valleys of central Alaska which will some day repay the tiller of the soil. These are the warm sedimentary soils. There are also thousands of acres of rolling foot-hill land where grow luxuriant bunch-grasses, on which live stock could fatten during the summer months. The interior is cold, but the absence of wind makes it more desirable for stock-raising than many of the northern States. The length of the winters is the greatest obstacle. Horses have wintered there, but they require to be in good flesh when turned out, in order to keep them warm, but they come out in the spring in very good condition. The annual snowfall is light in the interior, only amounting to about two feet, and often less. It is necessary to place the ground



in good condition before sowing cereals, and the Siberian seed is preferable.

Relatively speaking, of the country as a whole, there is a very small area that could be made productive, because hundreds of square miles are covered by swamps, lakes and sloughs. There are also hundreds of square miles of cold clay land which are covered with moss and scrubby spruce, on which it would be difficult to raise even a disturbance. The valleys are so extensive that productive localities may at some future time supply the home market with meat and vegetables, a time predicted to be inevitable. Grain hay can be grown, and it can be cured in the interior, but it would be impossible to cure it on the coast because of the moisture. Red-top grass grows to prodigious height on the coast, while in the interior the grass is short, although more nutritious. The summer seasons along the coast are much longer, and better vegetables, especially potatoes, can be grown there.

The descent of the Coast Range was accomplished in a cold rain, this being the usual thing in September. While plodding along in the rain and mud, I wished sincerely that some kind friend would rope me and take me to a place where prospecting was prohibited by law. After a good square meal at the Camp Comfort roadhouse, however, and while enjoying the warmth of a good fire, I found myself endeavoring to determine into what locality

I should venture the next year. The hosts at Camp Comfort always succeed in making the place conform to the significance of its name, and through their hospitality the prospectors associate good old Camp Comfort with the most pleasant memories of that trail.

The habit of prospecting, when once diamond-hitched upon a man, becomes a mental disorder. Only one in fifty finds pay for his hardships, but he has the consolation of striving for the cleanest money at large, and he knows when he gets it that he has not robbed another, legally or otherwise.

The illiterate man is usually the best assistant on the trail; as his mind is not filled with tangents or co-tangents, wise sayings of Shakespeare or the great statesmen. In consequence, he remembers what he did with a rope, just where he laid the ax, how many knives and forks the crowd started with, the brands on the horses, and when he last heard the bell. This all sounds ridiculous, but if I were choosing a good campman, I should prefer that his education were limited, so that he could remember the little things and not be concerned about his grammatical expressions.

There are diamond hitches, forward and backward—big diamond, little diamond—square knots and granny knots, walnuts and loops, and there are hobbles and side-hobbles, blinds and cinches, paniers, pack-saddles and aparejos. No; with too

much of other kinds of knowledge he cannot attend to all that properly; he becomes lost—forgets how to do things, and cannot recall where he has put a very insignificant but now all-important buckskin string. A deep-thinking, wool-gathering philosopher would be a decided failure as an assistant on the trail.

My companion was a contrast to the above, but he had had a lifetime of experience. His well-flavored camp stories were just about as long as a cigarette, and he was one of the best automatic and continuous entertainers I have ever met. He made a few locations, and afterwards he remarked that it was astonishing how good they looked to him after drinking a bottle of champagne; at such times and under such conditions he always raised their valuation.

An incident happened on this coast that summer, which is worthy of mention. A Mr. Howard was suffering with a hand that had been mangled by a charge from a shotgun. In his remote camp, Mr. Glendenning, an experienced Alaskan who had toured the coast alone in a row-boat, amputated the man's arm with a razor and an old meat-saw, and the crude operation, without anaesthetics, was a decided success.

While the whistling north winds played through the trees and told me of cold on the glacier, I sat by a warm fire and thought of the insufferable heat

of the deserts, plains and canyons of lower latitudes, and also remembered the damp and clammy fogs of the southern coasts, that chill the bones of the old, dampen the ardor of the young, and invigorate the moss on the houseroofs; wherefore I realized that all climates are imperfect.

Once more, I was back on the coast with another batch of doleful reminders of the trail—the sound of owl-hoots, the flickering of dying campfires, the mire of the swamplands, and the rain, mudholes and misery. It would be consistent if I were to change my name to that of “Misery” and come up there to live, devoting my days to the life of a prospector.

The vernacular of the prospectors awakened me to my surroundings, for my ears rang with such appellatives as “Oklahoma Bill,” “Alganik Bill,” “Staghound Bill,” although my appetite suggested duck-bills, and my pocket-book the many bills I had to pay. Then I lapsed back into dreams of such ungainly things as pack-saddles, sling ropes, diamond hitches, mantas and ponchos, while it rained and poured.

## CHAPTER XXV

*From the days of the mastodon the wolverine has defied his enemies, and his animal contemporaries have respected his prowess.*

THE summer of 1905 was spent among the high peaks, the roaring waterfalls, and the extensive glaciers that border Prince William Sound. My companion and I found ourselves once between the prongs of a canyon and looking dizzily over the edges we could see narrow, wild torrents, hundreds of feet below. The October night had settled upon us. The rain had poured down all day, and in addition to being drenched to the skin we were cold, tired and hungry; moreover, we had to face the fact that it was necessary to return to the head of the canyon and then cross a high mountain before we could reach our camp.

We became separated in the darkness, but we bumped and felt our way up the mountain; then slipped, slid and rolled down through the brush and timbers on the other side. I stopped, entangled among the dead limbs of a fallen tree-top, and there built a fire and shiveringly steamed one side, while the other was being rained on. The wind blew down the mountain and penetrated my wet cloth-



ing, so that I really longed for a "tenderfoot" for company, that he might amuse me with his wailing complaints. The day dawned with more rain and wet brush, and I wondered if my companion had met with more favorable experiences.

About ten o'clock I approached our camp to discover my companion coming to meet me. He had traveled all night. About midnight he had rolled down an embankment, caught at alders, and finally letting loose of them, had continued rolling, until at last he had stopped at a soft mossy place. He had lost his hat, and every loose article about his person, except a wild duck, and as he had not eaten anything for twenty-four hours, he immediately devoured that duck raw, wondering, as he sat in the cold drenching rain, whether I were enjoying as good a supper.

When afterwards we looked at the draw, through which he had fallen, we saw that if he had descended at a point fifty yards on either side, he must have fallen to the bottom of a three-hundred-foot precipice, and, as he expressed it, "no doubt the duck would have been more or less damaged."

We enjoyed a few sunshiny days of the kind that cause one's thoughts to wander around and become lost in heaven, because of the kindness of the elements. It was on such a day—the kind to make one forget one's debts, that I lay down in the tall grass and counted fifteen waterfalls that were de-

scending from a glacier on a shelf, about 1000 feet above.

While enjoying that scene, my attention was attracted by a large grizzly that arose from his bed in the grass and turned broadside, not more than one hundred yards away. Immediately I sent a pistol ball through his heart cavity, whereupon he emitted a savage growl, galloped a short distance and lay down for his last long sleep. Then another arose, much nearer, and stood on his hind feet, looking around for the cause of the report. My partner came over the ridge just at that moment and we both opened fire on that second one, and it was while tracking his blood-stained footprints that we discovered some copper ore. This we located, naming it the Wounded Bear mining claim. The bear descended to a glacier where the track was lost, and it is probable that he died among the crevasses.

When I was traveling on a glacier, about a week after that incident, I saw a wolverine approaching at a gallop. As he stopped and turned to examine something, I sent a bullet that mangled his heart and caused him to jump up and fall over. When I approached him he was gasping his last. That accidental pistol-shot was one of those that are liable to inspire one with too much confidence in one's shooting ability, as the distance was 154 steps.

That wolverine weighed about fifty pounds. He measured four feet from the end of his nose to the

tip of a twelve-inch tail; his neck was sixteen inches in circumference; his leg was only ten inches long, and his fore-arm was nine inches around. I should describe him as a big-necked, canine-toothed, large-eyed, and long-bodied animal with two short legs on each end. His flesh was composed of hard blue muscle, and his head was protected with a roll of the same impenetrable material. Because of this fact trappers often declare that they cannot kill a wolverine by beating it on the head with a club. A knife-fight with two common American black bears would be preferable to a like contest with one wolverine.

The wolverine is one of the most interesting of America's carnivora. He is not only American, and has attached his name to that of the Michiganders, but he has mingled his bones in almost all countries with those of the mastodons and other gigantic mammalia which lived thousands of years ago, in the dim past. His ancestors were common before there was a London or a St. Petersburg. With his surprising strength and sagacity, he has stood, and still stands, defying all enemies, even twice his size, to mortal combat. A whole pack of wolves will slink away cowardly from his presence, and a dog! why, a dog readily recognizes—by intuition, as it were—the mortal enemy of his ancestors, for the very scent of a wolverine's skin will cause him to hie away, bristling, barking and

growling, into seclusion. "Old Brigham," a well-known dog in Valdez, went completely back on me, fell three feet off a sidewalk and ran home, simply because he scented the fact that I had skinned a wolverine. The proper name for a wolverine is the hunter's appellation of "skunk bear."

My dog Pete displays good canine judgment when hunting, but draws the line on prospecting. Whenever I wash a pan of dirt, he looks into the pan, and then wonderingly at me. When I change to breaking rock, he smells the broken fragments, then closely fitting his tail in its natural trench, he walks over to one side and sits down, with the look that plainly says:

"My Master has 'em ag'in!"

Fish are almost too plentiful in Alaska to write about. In the early springtime, hundreds of tons of little candle fish and herring can be seen. The candle fish is a little hard roll of fish oil. The old-timers along Alaska's coast used those little sardines for candles, by sticking the mouth of the dried ones over a nail, usually driven into a table for the purpose, and then setting fire to the tail, which would burn and furnish light until the entire fish had been consumed. That is why they are called candle fish. These fish run in February and March, and are found as far inland as Mentasta Lake. They can be fried in their own oil, first starting the oil by immersing the fish in hot water.



Salmon ascend the rivers and streamlets in such numbers that where they are stalled by a dam, or a waterfall, they are found by the ton. They ascend little streams along the coast, where often they can proceed but a short distance from tide-water, yet there they stop, die and rot. They have lived in the sea the prescribed four years, and now are returning to the sparkling fresh waters of their youth to spawn and die.

Once we visited the Orca cannery, when it was said that there were 36,000 salmon lying on the wharf. We watched a Chinaman with a spiked pole sling the salmon up a chute, where another grabbed and dexterously beheaded them with a knife. The remains of the salmon were shoved up to another Celestial, who, in like manner, cut off the tails, and to another who severed the fins. We watched a salmon grow smaller, slip into a cleaning vat of hot water, come out and go into a machine that cut it into can-length pieces; then saw the machine ram those pieces into cans and cup the lids. After that, the cans were rolled down a chained run-a-way over a blaze of fire and under a stream of solder, and then into a basket, which was lowered into boiling water that did the cooking. Then they were set aside, labelled and boxed for shipping.

There was one of our number who was addicted to the dangerous habit of playing with statistics. He was so much inclined that way, that we generally



referred to him as "the computer." That great display of salmon induced him to produce his pencil, and he began figuring. Presently he accosted us with the question:

"To say that this Company has caught ten millions of salmon would not be unreasonable, would it?"

"Certainly not," I replied.

"Well, to say that they averaged two feet in length would be just as reasonable, wouldn't it?"

"Yes."

"Now, if ten millions of salmon were transformed into one, it would mean a fish twenty millions of feet in length, would it not?"

I committed the fatal error of agreeing to this also, and he continued:

"A fish that measures twenty millions of feet would be a little over 3700 miles long, but we can afford to throw off a few feet when we have so much fish in warm weather. Now, if that fish hooked his gill on Cape Cod, on the Atlantic coast, he could wipe San Francisco off the Pacific coast, with his tail, and he would measure so large around the shoulders that there would not be another man put off at Buffalo for some time! Of course I have nothing against San Francisco, besides San Francisco wouldn't mind it much, as she is used to such things, but it just shows what the fish could do if old Cape

Cod could stand the strain; besides, gentlemen, figures won't lie!"

One of the men employed there came to my rescue by remarking:

"No, but liars will figure!"

Alaska has sixty-six canneries and eighteen salt-eries with an annual output valued at \$11,000,000.

The autumn of 1905 settled in with the usual regular rainfall, and prospecting was exchanged for the more comfortable accommodations of a Valdez hotel. Several old pioneers assembled here to procure their winter supplies, and among them was one who deserves especial mention,—the noted Germansen.

There he sat, "doubled and folded," Lincoln-like; long, sinuous and slender, the result of a lifetime spent in the wilds. Germansen had been a child of the wild, a man of the wild, and now in his old days the fascinating phantom still invited him with a beckoning call. His kind, honest face inspired one with confidence, and his striking personality proclaimed him to be one to "tie to."

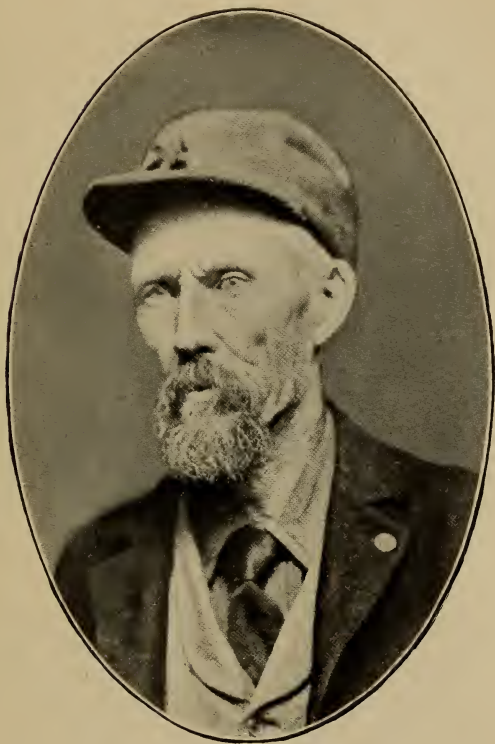
Many pioneers have followed Germansen, for he had led the van of the northwest pathfinders, years and years ago. Look on the map of the Canadian Northwest Territory and you'll see Germansen's Lake and Germansen's Landing. He was the first to cross from that country to Fort Simpson, away back in 1868. The life story of that hardy

pioneer is an interesting narrative, and in answer to my request for it, he untied a few knots of himself, drew his brawny hand across his forehead, and began:

"Well, it doesn't amount to much, but it is history. I was born in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, in 1843, on the site of an old abandoned Indian village, and in the sight of an Indian tepee, and I have been in sight of them almost ever since.

"I fought for the Union, but was discharged for injuries received on Shiloh's dark and bloody ground. I fought the Sioux with Generals Sibley and Sully. I once swam a horse across the Yellowstone River and then across the Missouri to get to Rock Fort Union. I was an Indian trader from 1865 to 1867, and dealt with the Blackfeet, Pegans, Bloods and Crees. I left St. Cloud for Winnipeg, where I procured fresh cattle and proceeded with the first emigrant train to Fort Edmonton. There were 500 carts, 700 half-breeds, and three white men,—Boyd, John Beaupré and myself.

"Again I started out to trade with the Indians, and employed Hugh Morrison, a man with a Black-foot wife, who had lived with the Indians for forty years. We came upon an Indian town of about three thousand souls, and, as my hair was red and long, they looked upon me as a freak, which I was. They swarmed around and grunted astonishment



*James Germansen.*  
*(at the time of his narrative)*





and awe as they ran their fingers through my scalp-lock.

"The price of a buffalo robe was two cups of flour, and it was but a short time until our carts were loaded down. When I was ready to leave, Chief Maxipeta (Great Eagle), kindly offered me my choice of his six wives, and insisted that I should take a certain pony-built one, but I declined the offer on the ground that I was too young. This incident caused an enmity towards me that prohibited me from returning to that village to trade. The old chief, however, warned me to look out for roving bands of his young Indians who were then on the warpath with the Big Knives, (Montana miners).

"We arrived safely at Fort Edmonton, and a few days later, 'Dancing Bill' (Tom Latham), an old California pioneer, came into camp and demanded flour; and although he had no money, he said he was going to have it. He wore two six-shooters and just took what flour he wanted. In about two weeks he returned, paid me in gold dust for what he had taken, and demanded more grub. He turned out to be a first-class fellow, and just lousy with gold dust.

"The 'Breeds,' as they were called, gave dances; the fiddler played to step dancers, who would bow and dance until exhausted, when another would take his place. The good dancers were show-

ered with moccasins and beaded presents by the squaws. This Tom Latham was a great clown, and he confided to me that he was going to show them a new 'Walla Walla' step and a 'Hangtown' jig. He did, and coming in late he danced until the fiddler became exhausted. The squaws looked upon this as such a feat, that they loaded Tom down with enough moccasins to last him through life. From that achievement, he got his name of 'Dancing Bill.'

"My acquaintance with 'Dancing Bill' and his partner, 'Black Jack' (Tom Smith, of Baltimore), broke me financially and transformed me from a trader into a prospector. I furnished an outfit of fourteen oxen, two cows and seven horses, loaded with supplies, for a trip through the Peace River country. We left Fort Edmonton on April 5, and arrived at Fort Dunvagan on September 15. There had been no frost, and the country at that time was a vast flower-garden. There we wintered. The next summer we ascended the Peace River, made the Rocky Mountain portage, and mined on Upper Peace, Sandy Bar and Findley Branch, washing out an ounce per day to the man. The next fall we arrived at Caribou, passed up Parsnip River to the Salmon River portage, and descended Frazer River 140 miles. I mined at Caribou in 1869.

"Oh, yes! I didn't tell you about my first bear! Well, I just rolled over Bruin and then, boy-like,

laid the gun across my arm unloaded, and leisurely but foolishly approached for an inspection of the trophy. Well, sir! That bear just rose up with a snort of blood and began to plead his side of the question with a charge! Say, I,—ha! ha!—I—I just *left* there!”

Then the narrator arose, and rubbing his legs, stepped very high, while he crossed and recrossed the room, as if to get them in good working order to demonstrate the long steps he took when fleeing from the bear. Then, after shaking off a convulsion of laughter, he continued:

“You should have seen that clown of a ‘Dancing Bill’ the winter we trapped! He volunteered to go to the creek and set my traps for a beaver, while I prepared breakfast. Now, he had never set a trap in his life, but he declared that he could do it.”

Again my informant stopped to laugh, and as he did so he buttoned up his coat, then unbuttoned it, doubled with his head between his knees and laughed some more.

“Well,” he continued, “it was but a few minutes until ‘Bill’ had returned with his hand beneath his coat and solemnly announced:

“‘I caught him!’

“‘What! caught one already?’

“‘Yep!’

“Then Bill withdrew his hand from beneath his

coat and there was the trap attached to three of Bill's fingers. I laughed so that it was with difficulty I could release his hand.

"He attempted once to ride a toboggan down a steep hillside. The toboggan went over into Peace River, and Bill was stuck head-first into a snow bank. I could just see his feet when I commenced to dig him out. He got up and shook himself, and said:

" 'I always expected to go to hell, but never once thought it would be done tobogganing!'

"Dancing Bill joined a crowd of miners one night, with a bucket of black sand under his arm. He also had a handful of gunpowder, which looked like the sand, and he threw the powder on the fire. As it flashed up, he raised the bucket of black sand and began to pour it into the fire, yelling:

" 'Here I go, boys!'

"Bill then quietly walked behind the bar and helped himself, as there was no one in the house to wait on him.

"Poor Bill! Years after that incident, when mining in the Cassiar country, on Liard River, he complained one day of being sick, and said to one of his partners:

" 'Ned, I am going to die and I want you to bury me under that spruce tree, over yonder, as I have prospected there, and it's only two-dollar dirt, so the boys won't molest me.'

"Ned laughed, as Bill walked over to his bunk and lay down with the remark that if only he had the old organ he had left at Wrangell he would play even with this world.

"When Bill was called to dinner, a few minutes later, it was discovered that he was stone dead. This Tom Latham, or 'Dancing Bill,' was born on the Schuylkill River, Pennsylvania. But there, I am ahead of my story.

"Once, when 'Black Jack' and I were traveling ahead looking for a way, we came out on a small clearing where there was a little Indian town. It was Sunday, and the whole tribe was inside a large tepee, holding religious services,—a sort of Catholicism which had been introduced into the country, and which the Indians had brought into those mountains. 'Black Jack' and I sat down on a log near by, and listened to the singing. It sounded so homelike that Jack, although rough and uncouth, turned to me and said:

"'Jim, they are above us!'

"Presently they came out and shook hands with us. There was one old man among them who had seen a white man. He surprised us by taking one of our guns and presenting himself in a military attitude; he then explained that he was an Iroquois who had helped the British fight the Yankees; that he had come into the northwest with the Hudson Bay Company, and here in the Rocky Mountains



had married a Stony squaw and had thirty descendants.

"In 1870 I left Fort Frazer for Fort St. James, on Stewart Lake; ascended through the Arctic pass into the Omeneca country and there discovered the Omeneca, or Peace River, diggings, on July 13, 1870.

"On November 15 I arrived at the mouth of the Skeena River, on the shore of the Pacific at Fort Essington, after exploring a route from our diggings through a very rough country, where I saw the wildest-looking Indians I had ever met. They were very primitive, living with dogs and covered with vermin in holes or dens in the ground, which we called smoke-holes. We descended into one of those dens to satisfy our curiosity, and then climbed back again, out through a smoke-hole just as rapidly as three men could perform the feat."

Here Germansen was seized with another spasm of laughter; and again he exercised and rubbed his legs, as though to keep them in condition for another emergency, if one should occur. He added:

"You see, we had been invited to climb out by a very wild-looking fellow who held a large knife in his hand, and we didn't hesitate for a second invitation. Those Skeena Indians killed several explorers the following spring.

"From Fort Simpson I took the Hudson Bay

steamer *Otter* for Victoria, where we landed, December 23, 1870. There I met Alexander MacKenzie, whom I had saved from starvation at Fort St. Johns. He was a nephew of Sir Alexander MacKenzie, who discovered the great MacKenzie River of the north. It was this same man who had put the cattle that went wild on Queen Charlotte island. Speaking of that island reminds me that there was a forest of totem poles there, but the many hundred Indians who once lived there have passed from the earth.

"I was in the Cook Inlet country in 1895. I hired two Indians to pack for me up the Matanuska, and we passed over to the Tazlina slope of the Copper River country where we killed a moose. I was told that the Indians would kill me, when I started on that trip, but I lived to follow the Yukon from its head-waters to the sea, and enjoy life on Middleton Island, the gem of the Northern Pacific Ocean. I tell you, Indians are not such bad people when they are treated right, but they have been terribly wronged by the white man.

"Besides my life in the north, I've mined in Montana, Colorado and California. Say, I believe I'll get two horses and spend next summer in the interior, as it is most too confining out there on the island. I am only sixty-two and a summer's outing would do me good."

He then arose and crossed the room to inspect a map on which was marked "Unexplored Territory."

And this was Germansen, a moral frontiersman with innate refinement; who never drank intoxicants, gambled, used tobacco or profane language—a magnificent type of the western pioneer. This is a bare outline of his wonderful life story. Imagine a summer spent in the wilds of the Matanuska with no companions but strange Indians, and that only one of a life-time of such incidents. It requires great force of character to live the life that paves the way for empires, but the North possesses many such characters. Verily, truth is stranger than fiction!

Three months after that interview James Germansen died at Juneau.





*Camp Comfort Roadhouse.*



## CHAPTER XXVI

*O, the days that we've numbered and the nights that we've  
slumbered*

*In the lone valleys 'midst forests of thrills;  
Where the water was splashing with silver salmon's lashing,  
And the great bighorns looked down from the hills!*

It is not such a precarious pastime to glance backward over the summer of 1906 as were the real experiences. Yet it is not more comfortable than were the many pleasant evenings I spent at good old Camp Comfort roadhouse during that summer. As this was only four miles from my copper locations, it was as a neighbor as well as a comfort to me when passing too and fro.

It is a mental pleasure to me now to glance from the present back to the scenes which linger in my memory, and to see again those black, high peaks silhouetted against the northern sky; storm-whipped peaks kissed into forgiveness by warm sunshine while other storms raged below. Again I can see the mountain goat, away up yonder, clinging to precipices and life with his remarkable tenacity. And such a life! He seems to say, "Behold in Me misery incarnate!"

I will relate an incident which happened during

that summer because it may partly demonstrate to the reader their attachment to the miserable existence they endure among precipices and snow-slides, summer rains and winter blizzards.

I had crawled among a bunch of twenty-three of them, feeding on rolling hills, and as we were out of meat I decided to lay in our summer's supply, then and there. Of course I should have "necked" them, or shot them through the top-shoulders, but did not know at the time that a precipice was so near. As they ran over a ridge I shot five through the heart cavities, expecting to find them lying along the trail of the others, but imagine my surprise, when following them over the ridge, to find a sheer precipice and not a goat in sight.

By clinging to alder brush, I managed to look down over the precipice, and counted three dead ones which were lying on shelves and in inaccessible places. A large one, yet untouched by one of my bullets, was standing on the side of the bluff where his place of footing looked no larger than a saucer. The Wolverine glacier filled the bottom of the canyon, directly below, and was about a mile wide at that place. A snow bank extended from the glacier to the wall of this precipice, a distance of about thirty feet.

I decided to break that goat's neck and drop him down onto the snow bank, which was at least two hundred feet directly below. By approaching over

the glacier, from the other side of the canyon, it would be possible thus to secure the meat. He was only about forty yards away, and nearly on a level with me. Crack! and he shot out of his niche in the wall, and descended like a bird, but when he struck the snow the impact caused it to give way, and I could hear that goat bumping down, down, down, under the glacier, and over other precipices beneath.

I spent some time in looking over those rolling hills, hoping that some of them had not gone into the bluffs, but in vain. I then returned to where I had broken the neck of the one who was clinging to the wall, and behold! there was another one in exactly the same place. He appeared to be a yearling, and had evidently emerged from around the wall, beneath me, having tracked the other to this place, whence further progress was an absolute impossibility.

As he was standing with his head from me, but looking at me, I decided to waste no more meat, but to sit down there and watch how he would manage to turn round and get back from that point. It was a most interesting sight to observe how he humped his back into an arch, and held his head close to his side to prevent over-balancing and tumbling to sure death, below! I became actually dizzy while watching him work his body around, an inch at a time, until he had completely turned. Then

the danger was not over, for it looked to me like an impossibility for any live thing larger than a fly to return along the face of that precipice. He stood upon his hind feet and placed his front feet against the wall, by his nose, but apparently he could not discover any way above him to get out.

Then he lowered himself, and intently scrutinized the way towards me. He was compelled to place confidence in my not hurting him as he should work his way along the face. Finally he lowered his head, craned his neck, and acted as though he had discovered a small jagged place which would hold his foot, while he should run a few steps. To halt anywhere short of twenty feet would mean destruction, so he looked at me as much as to say, "Now please let me try this, for it's my only way out," then he made the rush. My heart beat more quickly, while he attempted the feat, but he landed where again he could stand, and then again he looked at me, seeming to say, "How's that?"

It required at least half an hour for him to pick his way carefully, a step at a time, along that dizzy wall to a place directly beneath where I was sitting. I held on to an alder and peeped down at his back, not more than twenty feet away from me. I could have fastened a rope to the alders and have dropped a loop over his head, but if I had had the rope, I should not have done such a thing. No; for had we not lived together through a time when I had

held my breath nervously with fear that he should lose his life? Now we were companions in danger, and nothing should tempt me to destroy his life after it had been so carefully preserved. I could have shaken his foot in congratulation for his success, and should have enjoyed patting him only too well. I returned to camp completely satisfied, so far as that particular goat concerned me.

I saw eighty-three goats and fourteen bears during that summer. One unusual sight was a female bear with three cubs. It was interesting to watch her, as the correct control of such a playful family of three was evidently a task. Bears chastise their young, and often she gave one of them a slap to cause it to travel ahead of her. While two were rolling on an old snow bank, locked in each other's arms, the third would linger behind, apparently with no other purpose than to torment his maternal ancestor. Finally she let the little fellows roll as far down the bank as they desired, and turned her attention to the third. It was really laughable to watch that little fellow attempting to run past his mother, to where he knew he belonged without getting a slap. I have seen the little American black bears slap their young, and drive them up trees when they scented danger.

At another time that summer, I saw three bears across a canyon from our tent. I resolved to cross over, as two had turned back from their previous



course, and the third soon would be following in their tracks. I had just arrived within fifty yards of their trail when the third bear came along, just as expected.

Four pellets, for that was all they were, were sent through his body. He attempted to ascend a bluff in a small gully, but was too weak and turned down the gulch towards me. The fifth shot was sent for the head, but it struck him in the eye, and, as is generally the case with a bear, that kind of a shot had no perceptible effect upon him. When he was about twenty-five steps away, and just as he had lowered his head, the sixth shot was squarely placed between the eyes, and a little above. That shot caused me to step to one side, to allow his body to roll by. He was not after me, particularly, but was too weak to climb the mountain.

Valdez suffered considerably from the effects of a glacier flood that summer. A good portion of the town was washed away, and I watched one house—furniture, mortgage and all—go floating out into the bay.

Several persons lost their lives in the interior. A very sad incident was the drowning of Jim Montgomery, with his wife and child. The child had been born in the wilds of the Tanana, while Jim was out hunting, and the only attendant had been an Indian squaw. They had concluded to cease the vigil they had kept for years on Montgomery's

copper properties, and return to civilization through Skolai Pass and by the descent of the Nizina, Chitina and Copper Rivers. Their boat capsized in the Nizina River, and a wail went forth as the family drifted around the bend of the river. All were lost, except a Mr. Williams, who was also in the boat at the time, and who swam ashore. Some prospectors buried the bodies of the woman and child, but that of Montgomery never was found. Montgomery and I had descended the Copper River together in 1901.

The other summers that I spent in Alaska were not devoted to hunting or prospecting, as my time was occupied in working my copper properties near the coast. Ben Price, a good pistol shot, killed a bear near my camp with his Frontier revolver at a distance of one hundred yards. It was during that summer of 1907 that a man shot down six other men from ambush in Keystone Canyon. This was done in a dispute over a railroad right of way, and in an effort to keep railroads out of the interior—that is railroads which would be going in for the purpose of becoming public carriers, and whose owners were not building the lines to their own properties. The present indications are that Alaska is destined to be bottled up for the benefit of a few. 1907

In 1903 seven persons attempted to float down the Nizina River in a small boat, and four of the

seven were drowned. One woman swam down stream a long distance, but finally sank. A little boy wept when assisted into the boat, and he, too, was drowned. A man was going down the river on a raft with his two dogs. The dogs returned the following day, but the man never was heard from. Another was drowned near Taral, and another lost his life in an airhole in the ice, during the early part of the spring. Bundy, a colored man, was drowned in the Tazlina River where Gokona Charley had been drowned the year before.

In 1898 four men were exploring and prospecting in the Chitina country. At the foot of a high gravel bank, a stone that rolled down the embankment broke a leg of one of the party. These heroes bandaged the broken limb, threw away all unnecessary articles, improvised a litter with a blanket and carried their wounded companion out of that country. One carried the scanty provisions and cut the way with a hatchet, while the other two carried and rested at intervals. They crossed dangerous rivers, waded through swamps, climbed over hills, and were days in doing it. They used up all of their supplies and were nearly exhausted when they arrived on the bank of the Copper River. There they secured a boat, took the invalid down the river, and placed him on board a steamer bound for home, where, no doubt, he remembered his heroic deliverers and their gallant struggle with gratitude. Five years

after that incident, a few picks and shovels were found where they had left them, and where valuable placer diggings were later discovered.

Young men who went to Alaska desired to secure fortunes that their sweethearts might be insured a home and comfort, to enjoy matrimonial bliss. Contentment constitutes happiness and not money. Away among the nooks of the hills and forests it may be found. There where the vines lovingly entwine the cabin; where flowers display their smiles to the morning sunlight; where the babbling brook murmurs love, and the birds sing it in the trees, if love dwell in the cabin, there also live the millionaires of happiness.

I was accosted by a young man who had returned from a summer's prospecting. He evidently was extremely happy, and slapping me on the shoulder announced his success in locating some good ground and selling it for a reasonable sum.

"Come up to my room and I will tell you about it!" said he.

In the room he threw down a lot of unopened letters he had received, and picking up a neatly addressed one he exclaimed:

"Ha, ha! That's from the best girl that ever lived! She caused me to come north, and I have suffered and starved, fought and bled with the devil of the wild, for her sake. I was financially bankrupt and needed only enough to care for her in



proportion to my love. I desired so much to place myself on an equal plane with her, in order that she might refer to her property as ours. I did not want her property, but marriage should be an equal partnership, and I hoped to be equal to her standard; but she seemed not to understand. Oh, how I suffered because of a love that I feared I could not make happy!

“Many times have I awakened with tears in my eyes, because I was not in a position to care for her, as she had been raised. Sometimes I thought she did not care for me at heart, for never once did she express a line of sympathy for me—not one line of anxiety or caution, although she must have known I was risking my life for her.

“Apparently she did not care sufficiently for me to study the map of Alaska for ten short minutes, so that she might talk intelligently of the country when I had returned three thousand miles to visit her. The worst of all was, that she never encouraged me to do a thing. Mind you, I did not need her sympathetic encouragement, but desired so earnestly to see those noble principles in her. A man’s life is in the hands of the woman he loves, and she can elevate his morals and stimulate him with encouraging influence, or she can, by the absence of such influence, drive him to the depths of despondency and possibly to despair.

“Because of her indifference I doubted. I did not



turn to drink, but to this path I bridle-reined myself from the possibility of following other trails to dissipation, and in consideration of my deep love for her I threw myself into the wilds of the frontier, beyond all temptation.

"Although she is refined and educated, she has never quoted one line of prose or poetry in all our correspondence. Despite it all, I felt somehow that she cared for me. If I had been quite sure of her love, and had had the necessary home of my own to have made her happy, I should have been the happiest man on earth. Now, at last, although I fear she has waited long, I possess enough to make us a little earthly heaven. Please be indulgent while I read what she has written in this, another of her all-too-short missives."

His face was all aglow with hope and animation, while he picked up the neatly addressed letter and carefully opened it, as though it were almost too sacred to mutilate. I asked myself: How could love exist without expressive sympathy and anxiety, interest and encouragement for proof? Direct words of "I love you," are too easily said to be sufficient proof to one so deeply in earnest, whose love was so imperative that it demanded absolutely moral and refined expression in exchange for his affection.

While admiring the carefully addressed envelope that indicated the neatness, precision and ideality of the writer I was forced also to admire his manhood,

nerve and morality that had induced him to throw the current of his life away from all temptation, in her behalf. As he had intimated, she could not possibly understand. Before he began reading, he added, as if interpreting my thoughts:

"Whenever I looked for that proof of her love I met with disappointment. If she had taken an interest in my life, which meant so much to both of us, instead of being silently—and I might say stolidly—indifferent, my doubts never would have existed, to have handicapped my success, and I would not have cared for money through which to obtain happiness."

As he read quietly, his face gradually changed from an expression of joy to one of anxiety, and presently he murmured aloud:

"And—she—really—did—love—me!"

His face then quickly turned white, and he tightly crumpled the letter as he—dry-eyed—stared into vacancy with an expression of intense agony. I watched his finger-nails sink deeply into the flesh of his clinched hand, and deeper and deeper they sank, but no feeling was there, for all sensitiveness was in his heart and it was bleeding. In steady, monotonous and steel-like tones he exclaimed:

"Too late! Too late!"

I arose to depart, saying that I would drop in at some other time. When closing the door, I glanced back and saw that the chalk-like face was down in

the crook of his elbow, on the table, and I heard him murmur :

“ Too late! Too late! ”

As I walked away I asked myself :

“ Did she love him? ”

I doubted.

## CHAPTER XXVII

*"Round brightly burning campfires, they would sit and spit and spit,  
'While the tales of some old liars, or perchance a bit of wit,  
Would cause the laugh to circle; then for encores they would call,  
For campfire laughs and stories are the heartiest of them all."*

HERE are a few reminiscences and campfire stories:

A small husband and his very large wife attempted to cross the Valdez glacier in 1898, by the man pulling a hand-sled and the woman guiding. When nearly exhausted, the little man sat down on the sled and, wiping the sweat from his face, said:

"Mary, don't you wish you were back on the farm?"

"No, I don't! It was Alaska, 'Alaska, if you could only get to Alaska you'd make your fortune; now, confound you, let's see you do it! Get in there and mush on!"

And with a sigh the poor little fellow replaced the collar over his head and "mushed on."

When an Alaska dog-driver addresses his dogs



*Telling Camp-fire Stories.*





by the word, "Mush," they readily understand that it means "Go!" If working, they pull harder when so addressed, and if in a tent, they go outside.

Two Irishmen were watching a dog-team pull. Observing the leader's actions when so addressed, one turned to his companion and said:

"Sure now, thot dorg Mush is a foin puller!"

"Faith, and they feed thim on the diet of mush, and it's the promise of it thot moiks thim pull," he answered.

It is related of an Alaska dog-driver that after driving a team of dogs all winter, he came down to Seattle, and entered a restaurant for breakfast. The waiter, as is customary, inquired "Mush?" and the dog-driver, looking up in astonishment, seized his hat and walked out.

The same dog-driver was once lost on the glacier, and when asked why he didn't consult his compass, he answered:

"I threw the blamed thing away."

"Why did you do that?" was asked.

"Because it wouldn't point north," he answered.

Prospectors generally are extensive travelers. A man by the name of Palmer went to Dawson in 1898, thence down the river 2000 miles to St. Michael's, thence to Nome, thence to Dutch Harbor, where he boarded an English vessel for Japan. He then went to Korea, and from there to the Philip-

pinces, where he prospected in the mountain districts; thence back to San Francisco, thence to Chicago, and in 1902 he camped with me in the Copper River country, Alaska.

When relating his experience, one night, while sitting by the campfire, he said that when he was a boy he had worked for a man in Missouri who paid him off in worthless bank-notes. When asked what he had done with the notes, he replied:

"Oh, I found some people down in the southern part of the state who could neither read nor write, so I spent 'em."

Palmer once bet five dollars with a stuttering kid that he could spit nearer than he to a mark, placed seven feet from a given line on which they should stand. The challenge was accepted, and the kid, toeing the line, made a commendable squirt. Palmer followed, and lying flat on the floor, with his toes on the line and his face within a foot of the mark, he began to pucker, with a certainty of winning the money. When the stuttering kid realized the trick, and also his danger of loss, he jumped up and began such a stuttering remonstrance that Palmer was compelled to laugh, and of course that destroyed his pucker, causing him to shoot wild of the mark and lose the wager.

Seattle, the city on the hills, the future gateway to half the world, is the winter rendezvous for the

most fortunate prospectors. Here false friends await their return, and too often the inexperienced fellows fall easy victims to the unprincipled vampires of humanity. They may be rich in pocket, but poor in experience with the outside world. Their years of isolation have caused them to forget and forgive, and now their hearts long for sociability.

They have left the dark recesses of the forests, the lonely canyons and hardships of the trail; and now the music of the deadfalls, the swirl of the dance, and the sociability of the lower strata of humanity are in such vivid contrast to the howl of the wolf-dog, the hoot of the owl, and the dying embers of the campfire, that their heads too often whirl in dizzy intoxication because of their new, bright and dazzling surroundings. They meet false friends, but they care not, as their big hearts have long bled for companionship, and now their money is as free as the dashing silvery sprays on the mountain-sides, that flash like diamonds in Alaska's sunlight.

Three men who had just returned from the north were enjoying comfort in one of Seattle's hotels. One was an old-time prospector, in possession of all the peculiar expressions of his class; the second was a packer, who had been running a pack-train to the mines, and who could talk nothing but horse lore; and the third had been a sailor and a sea-captain most of his life, but had been caught in the gold rush, and had prospected for two years. They had

come down together and were comparing notes of their experiences during their first forty-eight hours in the city.

"I say, fellers," said the prospector, "I've struck a lead! She's pure mineral gloss, a yard wide, with well-defined hangin' walls—pure glance, and a fissure vein runnin' square across the contact! She's in hard luck, and her mother's sick, and didn't I dig up? What's a hundred or two, anyway? Talk about valuable properties and lucky strikes! I tell ye she's a beaut, and I'm goin' to locate accordin' to the rules of this deestricht."

Then the declaimer drew a cigar from his pocket, bit off the end and settled himself back for a smoking anticipation of future happiness.

"I caught a bronk myself," said the packer. "Met her down the trail, just below here, where a feller had her corraled, and he introjuced us, and as she was going home alone, and was sorter skittish-like and timid, I asked the privilege uv trottin' with her. Bust my cinch if she isn't slick as a mole, with neck uv a fawn and eyes uv an antelope. She's a thoroughbred, without a blemish, not even a wind-gall, and I said I'd put my dough on her when I fust threw the blanket across her wethers."

"I sighted a craft myself!" chimed in the sailor. "She was one uv the neatest sailors that ever flew canvas, and when spoken she heaved to and we hitched on, sorter-like; come to find out, she had lost



her reck'ning and I put her on her course. When she found that my cargo was mineral, she advised me to take in sail and go a little slower. Shiver my mainmast if she wasn't a clipper fer yer glasses! What's money, if ye don't do good with it? When called on by a ship in distress, answer, 'Aye, Aye, sir!' Them's my sentiments. But, by the way, Mr. Packer, was the bark ye were sailin' with, the one ye were alongside uv when ye passed the Diller Light-house?"

"That wuz the filly I wuz trottin' with, and right thar wuz where we made the fust turn, and she wuz next the pole and close up!"

"The one with the top-gallant, and long canvas draggin'?"

"Yep; thar wuz most too much blanket."

"Pard, my sail's down and the anchor is over-board! Goin' to compute recknin' fer a few days, then tack ship on another course! My log says, we met the same vessel and she were a pirate! Yes, sir, a pirate!"

"Do ye say that wuz the winner ye picked and lost yer scads?"

"Yep, and I say mor'n that! I say let's enter some snug harbor and drink to each other's storms and head-winds."

They shook hands and then concluded to take the miner with them. When awakened from his meditations, he said:

"I'll go, gents, fer I think I've been working the same drift, but fust, allow me to ask a few. Was the lead ye were follerin' carryin' a black cappin', and did it have a prominent gray foot-wall?"

"Yep, the sail wuz gray," said the sailor.

"Was the sparklers a black oxide?"

"Yep," replied the sailor.

"Dark and sort uv languishin'," added the packer.

"Well, fellers, we might as well throw our sledges into the brush, touch the fuse to our powder and blow out! I'm with ye!"

Charley Mamon was chased by a grizzly, and when asked why he ran, he answered:

"Because I couldn't fly, sir!"

McCarthy was chased by a female grizzly, and he came running into camp with his hat in one hand and a hatchet in the other. He was asked why he didn't throw the hatchet at her, and he replied that he needed that to cut the wind as he ran.

While in the north I came within four inches of making a fortune. I found asbestos with fibre one inch long, and if it had been five I should have made a fortune. It is embarrassing to be a millionaire. When disporting a gold-nugget chain in a Seattle hotel lobby, a man was overheard to remark:

"There is one of those Alaska millionaires!"

At that particular time, I couldn't have purchased a sandwich for an ant.

We entered a large tent at Valdez, which was a sort of a rendezvous for prospectors, miners, packers and their retinues, and where tobacco smoke was about all that could be seen until one's eyes became accustomed to the surroundings. A man in a corner said:

"Bring yer carcass over here, pard, and quiet yerself on my sleeping-bag, fer a feller that looks like ye should not be seen and seldom heard."

The invitation was accepted with a comment to the speaker for his applicable remarks, and the conversation was resumed.

"I say, Lew, what kind uv a trip did ye have to Slate Creek?" asked one.

"Just two hundred miles uv a picnic," replied Lew, "except we had a tenderfoot uv a veterinary surgeon along who didn't know straight up. We tried to lose him on the Gokona, but the chump stumbled into camp by accident. That Yazoo couldn't boil water without burnin' it. Veterinary! Why, he didn't even know that a wart from a horse's leg would cure the colic!"

"Wuz that the feller what wore the leggins?"

"Yep."

"Gee! That feller didn't have brains enough to oil a gimblet! Chris and Nick should have had him along with them when they were amusin' the bar. Say, Chris, tell the boys about yer bar fight on the Copper."

"Out with it," demanded another.

Chris began to move uneasily about on a sack of flour, and evidently the subject was about to be changed to bears.

"Steam up, Chris, we're waitin'," ordered the engineer of a little steam launch that plied between Valdez and Fort Liscum.

"Well," said Chris, "Nick and me did see a bar and the bar seed us! I said, 'Nick, better shoot!' Nick, he shot; bar come, we run! I fell down and said, 'Nick, better shoot!' Nick he shot, bar bawled and we run! I fell in a creek, but when I got out, I said, 'Nick, better shoot!' Nick he shot, and we run through some brush and up a hill. We looked and couldn't see any bar, and we listened and we couldn't hear any bar, and I said, 'Nick, better shoot, anyway!' Nick he shot, and we came to Valdez!"

"How long did you go without a hat, Chris?"

"About three weeks."

Evidently he had jumped from under his hat, had never returned for it and had come eighty miles to Valdez. Uncle Charley remarked:

"If dose fellers hat not peen smart peoples dey would not got away alive!"

A military officer came in to smoke and to listen to the edifying conversation, and "Windy Jim" concluded that the officer should be introduced to

some one; so he jumped up and with assumed gravity introduced him to "Uncle" Charley Brown, who asked:

"You say he vas a soltger?"

"Yes, Uncle Charley, this is an officer in the United States Army."

"Oh, I tought he vas a Swede!"

The officer asked Uncle Charley's nationality, and he replied:

"I vos a Timocrat!"

Presently the proprietor walked to the center of the room and stretched and yawned as an indication that he wished to retire, but it was an abortive attempt, for no one wished to take the hint. They sang songs and finished by singing:

"Round my Alaska cabin lie the goldfields,  
In the distance looms the glacier, clear and cool;  
Oftimes my thoughts revert to scenes of childhood,  
And I wish I were a boy again at school."

Again the proprietor stepped to the center of the room and kindly requested his partner to retire and give the visitors a chance to go home; whereupon he was caught, and his arm held out while all took several turns at shaking it and bidding him good-night.

The next day a packer approached Ed —, leading a horse, and said:

"Ed, I'm goin' to take ye up on yer price for this



piebald plug uv yourn, but I'm goin' to straddle him first and want ye to hold his smellers while I git off the earth."

"If ye are hankerin' after suicidin' by tryin' to ride him without a saddle, he'll help ye, fer he's a mighty commodatin' cuss in that respect, but ye better leave me the address uv yer relatives."

As Bill hitched up his trousers, preparatory to making the mount, Ed took a firm hold of the horse's nose and remarked:

"Somethin's goin' to drap!"

When Bill was, as he believed, firmly seated, he ordered the horse turned loose, and then there was a commotion, for the rider took two turns in the air and came down in a manner that indicated firmness. He arose, and as he hobbled up to Ed, he handed out the money, saying:

"He's mine! Yer see I was stuck on him, Ed!"

"Yep, for about three jumps!" replied Ed, as he took the money, and added:

"As the performance was better than advertised, Bill, I guess the pizen is on me, so we'll irrigate!" and the two started off to interview King Alcohol.

Frank — met a bear on the shore of the Klutena Lake, and by killing him, established his reputation as a bear hunter. Dr. T—— insisted that Frank should accompany him to the haunts of many bear, up the St. Anne Creek. They ascended about

a mile, and stationed themselves on each side of a point where bear came out every evening to feed on salmon, and where one could watch up the creek and the other down.

Presently Frank heard the doctor shooting as rapidly as he could pump his Winchester, and looking over he saw the M. D. shooting at his own large black dog, that was tracking them over the creek bars, down below. The doctor's eyesight was poor and he wore glasses, but he continued to shoot until the dog ran right up to him, and when he discovered his mistake, he exclaimed:

"The Holy Moses! I might have shot my own dog!"

Frank laughed at him, for missing his dog, until the doctor became angry and said:

"You infernal imbecile! I might have killed my own dog! I don't want to be alone with a laughing idiot, anyway," and accordingly started for camp. Frank concluded to overtake him and, by apologizing, get him back in a good humor.

After traveling half a mile, he came to where the doctor was standing on the bank of the creek, watching the salmon swimming in clear water about ten feet below and, as he wore a handkerchief tied over his ears, because of mosquitoes, he failed to hear the approach of his mischievous companion. The water was about five feet deep, and it suddenly occurred to Frank to give the M. D. a scare; so, acting on the

impulse of the moment, he jumped and grabbed the doctor, emitting a savage growl, whereupon the doctor yelled a war-whoop, turned around, ran backwards and fell into the creek.

Fortunately he had dropped his weapon and it had sunk to the bottom, for, when pale with fright and half-strangled, he arose and stood upright in the water and saw Frank there, roaring with laughter, he swore he would shoot such a laughing idiot, just as soon as he could get his gun. Every time he reached down after the gun, the water came over his head and caused him to straighten up; then he would renew his declaration and Frank would yell with laughter. As the doctor was making desperate exertions, it dawned on Frank that his pacifying efforts had been a complete failure, and he took to the brush and remained in seclusion for several days.

#### AN ALASKA RIVER INCIDENT

"I don't believe I should attempt to raft across the river right here, but I should tow along the shore up to that point, if I were you. There is danger of your going through the rapids down below, and, while you could surely cross before reaching the box canyon, a mile farther down, yet it is rather dangerous to risk it."

"Well, suppose I do go through the wild water down there, I've not been killed nor drowned up-to-

date and I'll risk being carried down to the box canyon.

The thought of the box canyon was enough to cause a shudder to pass through one's anatomy, for a raft would probably emerge at the outlet, four miles below, merely as kindling wood.

"I know," continued Ben, "that a raft on water is just about as stubborn as a donkey on land, but I'll take this chance, because the rapids don't amount to much, anyway."

He pushed the five-log craft out on the water, and the swift current soon took him to where it was too deep for his pole to reach bottom. Ben was a happy-go-lucky fellow, without fear, and he was a skilled frontiersman, who could not be killed, or drowned under ordinary circumstances.

"By George! He is going through the rapids, as sure as fate!" exclaimed Will. "Let us take a cut-off for the bend of the river and have some fun at coaching him as he comes by."

We ran two hundred yards across a sharp point, and emerged on the bank just as Ben came rushing along. He was seated on the raft, holding on tightly while the angry waters dashed against his face. We intended to advise him not to hurry, to go a little slower, and had laughed at the absurdity of the advice as we had run along the trail, but Ben anticipated us, and with grinning countenance, yelled:

"If you fellows have anything to say to me, go to the canyon, for I'll be down there in just about ten minutes!"

We roared with laughter as he went bobbing through the rapids, and because he had half a mile after he was through, in which to reach the opposite shore, we gave little thought to the box canyon, below.

"See!" exclaimed Will, "he is not making headway; in fact, I believe he is losing! There must be a strong current, down there, beating him back towards this side!"

We then realized that Ben's ride on the river had developed from a mere joke into serious danger, and we watched with bated breath his gallant struggle for life. We were powerless to assist him, and as he grew smaller and smaller in the distance, it appeared to us that he was already entering the dreaded box canyon—that terrible boiling, foaming, sinuous water serpent. It crawls undertowingly by, where precipitous walls hang 600 feet above.

The sun sank in the northwest and the curtain of twilight was lowered on that dreadful scene of man and raft flying into the mouth of that yawning vortex. We could do nothing, and as we turned towards camp it was with a feeling of certainty that no power of man could save the life of big, good-hearted Ben.

The night settled down apparently with deeper



darkness than usual, and the lonely owl-hoots seemed announcements of death. Even Pete, our dog, looked sad, whined and cast longing glances down the river. There was Ben's sleeping-bag where he had spread it beneath a spruce in anticipation of a night's rest when he returned, and there was his gun hanging in a near-by tree. All seemed to add to our melancholy; but the saddest part of it was the fact that we had been powerless to lend assistance. After supper, we talked of the incident; and then tried to divert the subject to something else, but in vain. We retired, but could not sleep. Presently Will arose, rebuilt the fire and declared he should not sleep a wink that night. Then we sat there and talked for an hour about spending the morrow below the canyon searching for the body of poor Ben. Shortly after midnight, as Will was putting the coffee-pot on the fire, an owl gave an extra hoot and the dog jumped up and gave a bark of recognition. Then these words came from the dark recesses of the forest:

"That's right, Will, for I'm hungry."

It was Ben! Just before entering the canyon the raft had broken in pieces, and with one log he had been carried into an eddy which had hurled him over against the shore on our side.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

*We'll forget the cold December, when the north winds  
played their tune,  
But of green vales we'll remember, when 'twas all day-  
light in June;  
'And we'll harken to the calling of the wild life and pursue  
Where are songs of waters falling and the broad leaves nod  
to you.*

WHEN one departs from Alaska, there must always be the feeling that one is leaving a wonderland. The reader may think that too much emphasis is being placed on that statement, but those who are in close touch with Nature as there revealed realize the majestic scale of the panorama. To be able to see a mountain 150 miles away is wonderful; and so are the smoking volcanos and the glaciers. The sudden appearance and disappearance of mountains and islands is also wonderful.

Islands have been known to arise from the Pacific ocean as far back as when the Russians were exploring its waters, and some of them also have sunken. Castle Rock came up in 1779, and in 1903 Fire Island arose not far from it. In 1906 Perry, or McCulloch Island arose between them to a height of 395 feet, and while it was hot and steam was emitting from it, some men climbed to the top. That

island, before it had cooled, sank with a loud explosion on September 1, 1907. Now there is only a sand-spit connecting Castle Rock and Fire Island.

These and many other facts go to prove it to be a wonderland. Even St. Patrick must have thought it worthy of notice, for he, with his magic staff, evidently struck Alaska with the same effect as when he blessed Ireland. There are no snakes in Alaska, and only a few tree frogs, to give one a creepy suggestion.

When we boarded the ship for the States it was raining that continuous downpour, which signifies to the prospector that it will continue until it snows. The fog clung dismally to the mountain-sides, when possibly at the same time the top peaks were piercing through into sunshine.

The seagulls forlornly drooped their wings and all Nature seemed in gloom. It is remarkable how true are the old sayings regarding the weather. I will testify to the fact that the adage, "When rain begins before seven, it will quit before eleven," positively came true in Alaska. It began before seven in August and quit before eleven in November. I should be too modest to make an official report of the rainfall to the weather bureau. A prospector, who, I admit, might have drunk rather freely of glacier water at some time or another, declared that it rained into a beer bottle until it was burst. He offered to show me the broken glass.

Our ship rode at anchor at Katella. Gasoline launches invited passengers to land where there were mud-sidewalks in a newly-built town; also saloons and blear-eyed gamblers. Bruised combatants had filled the hospital there. They had been fighting over a railroad right of way that extended from the near-by coal fields to the copper in the interior.

It is probable that when a railroad is built, it will be to private properties, and the poor mine-owner, who happens to be a little to one side, will be left to die a natural death, while his property will be gathered in by a great smelter trust, that is trying apparently to bottle up Alaska. *Suggestion*

As our ship left the main, the overhanging gloom, the dissipated and bruised faces all suggested a repetition of the dogma, "There's never a law of God or man runs north of fifty-three." But with all this there is a call from out the wild, and a fascination that beckons. While weak ones fall, Alaska also builds character, self-reliance and manliness.

Our ship carried us out into a storm. I am surprised that I am not numbered with the drowned. A relative once prayed that I should have fair wind on my voyage to the north, when it meant adverse winds for all others coming on an opposite course. It is a wonder that he didn't get me into trouble.

We left the ocean and entered the calm inside

passage near Alaska's collar button known as Cape Spencer, where in Icy Straits

"His lordly ships of ice  
Glisten in the sun;  
On each side,  
Like pinions wide  
Flashing crystal streamlets run."

It was there that the steamer *Dora* struck an iceberg, and in order to be saved was run on a near-by beach, when the firemen were waist-deep in water. Dave Rhodes, a government packer from Copper River, when relating the incident, said:

"I'll just be dad-blamed if it didn't look mightily like wadin'!"

When one goes to Alaska in summer, by way of the inside route, one feels secure from danger. If an accident should happen to the ship, it could be run easily on the near-by shore; or, if you were compelled to go ashore in a rowboat, you could paddle it with your hands; or, you might even ride a spar; or, if you could kick a little bit, you could swim ashore, and the light would enable you to see just where to land. Yes, one feels secure in summer, but it is different in winter. Then the nights are long, stormy and black—dark would not be the proper term.

Probably you cannot see the shore on a stormy night, even if it be but a few hundred yards away,



and you become restless. You wonder how that storm-beaten, wrinkled and fierce-visaged pilot, who walks the bridge, can know within twenty miles of his location, much less make the many intricate turns with that boat. You strain your eyes trying to look through that ink blackness, and occasionally you see the massive shape of a mountain, apparently right in front of your ship, and you hold your breath while that pilot steers the boat right into it—that is, he simply enters a crack, while you realize that the denser blackness is on both sides of the vessel, and it was only the shores that approached nearer together.

The rain beats across the deck with the wind, and it is with difficulty that you stand there, but you are interested. You want to know just when to jump, for you are satisfied that the final climax of that voyage is near at hand. You know that rocks must be close to the surface, where no human eye can see them, and you feel that all of the passengers who are sleeping in their berths will be drowned like rats in a trap.

Occasionally the pilot blows the whistle, and the echo quickly returns from the mountain on the starboard side, and the pilot bears the boat off to the port side, just a little. He was feeling evidently with his ear! You become drenched to the skin while waiting for the wrecking that does not come, and you wish it would hurry along, as the strain is almost too much for your nerves. When you can

withstand the severity of the storm no longer, you retire, with resolving to go down with the rest.

You are awakened from your sleep by the stopping of the engines and then the boat lies quietly for an hour or two. Just as you begin to continue your snoring, you are awakened by the starting of the engines. That unpretending pilot, that epitome of wisdom, who can work both solar and lunar observations, calculate azimuths, find the arithmetical complement of logarithms, build false rudders on stormy seas and who can tie all kinds of complicated rope-knots, now impresses you that he has discovered a rift in a cloud which has disclosed to him a familiar mountain-top, a tree-top, or some other object that indicates another entrance to total darkness.

You are astonished at the ability of that death-facing, but duty-loving, pilot to follow the many intricate windings, and you wonder if salt water does not course through his veins. To follow those curves is as simple to him as it was to you, in your childhood days, to follow the path that led to school. It is as simple to him as for the frontiersman to read the approximate time of day or night by the clocks of heaven.

If I were on a winter voyage to or from Alaska, I should feel safer when a thousand miles from land, where pilots are unnecessary, and where progress is made by dead reckoning—but a dry death is generally considered preferable. In summer time—ah!

can one ever forget the tranquillity of a summer voyage through those inside passageways?

The weather was good to us, and the evenings were so calm and warm that when we passed the Indian town of Metlakaptla, we were greeted by the Indian cornet band, assembled on the wharf. The music sounded beautifully, as it came to us over the quiet water and apparently from a wilderness surrounding that little village.

I have listened to a hundred trained human voices in a rendition of Mendelssohn's oratorio of "Elijah," and it was truly wonderful; but even that was far excelled, to my mind, by a thousand orally trained voices of the wilderness, singing without written notes. This was done by a flock of black-birds. When a boy, I used to secrete myself near them, to listen to their melodious song. One would start, then another would add his little voice, and another, and still more, until probably a thousand little voices were raised in glad song. Suddenly, and on one note, they would stop! It has always been a mystery to me how that great number of birds could train themselves to sing so long, and yet know on which precise note to make that sudden stop. Fright was not the cause, for they continued to repeat their song over and over again.

Their singing is no less wonderful than the black-bird aerial drill. To witness that, one must be within a few miles of the extensive swamps where

they hatch their young. One must be a mile at least from the flock to obtain a proper view of the maneuvering. Few are ever so fortunate as to see this grand spectacle.

Of course, one could not see a single bird, for in drilling there may be many thousands. They will scatter so that they appear to fade away, then will form together in a large black ball; then that ball will contract and bulge out at the top and bottom until there are three great spheres. Often they will run up to a point forming a cone, then dissolve into a large circular ring and again form in mass and an inverted cone. Their many beautiful ribbonlike maneuverings are truly surprising, and one wonders how every single bird can know his exact place in assisting the forming with his little body of those gigantic aërial figures. Although we too are a part of Nature, human beings have not yet been capable of doing what can be done by those intelligent little blackbirds.

The reader may wish to know something more about that Indian town just mentioned. The missionary is the only white man allowed there. The Indians have their own sawmill, their own electric light plant, and they build their own comfortable houses. Their children go to church and Sunday school. Those Indians make a living at fishing for the southern markets. Their cornet band is worthy of notice anywhere, and has given exhibitions in



Seattle. I believe President Roosevelt once recommended justly, that they be allowed to acquire title to mining properties.

We were surprised at the development of the coast, bordering the inside passage. The thriving town of Ketchikan had been built, and smelters had been constructed for the reduction of ores discovered on the islands. Port Prince Rupert, near old Fort Simpson, has been chosen as the terminal of the Canadian Grand Trunk Pacific railroad—another steel band which is soon to reach across the continent.

Just inside of the Alaska boundary line, near Hunter's Bay, are numerous copper discoveries. There is evidence of an old mine there that possibly had been worked a thousand years ago. Carved stones have been found, covered a foot deep with moss and dirt. While miners were working 250 feet below the surface, they broke into an old chamber which was 105 feet long, 77 feet high and 20 feet wide. It contained old timbers, that are now mostly rotten wood and mould. It is supposed that this chamber was entered by way of a side-tunnel. Very little evidence of that tunnel remains, however, as it has been filled with lime-stone leachings. On top of the mountain, 3300 feet above the sea, there was unearthed a number of old brass coins, with square holes in the center, indicating that once they had been used as Chinese money.







*Greenville Channel.*

That discovery is worthy of more than a passing notice, and those who devote their time to such things might do well to investigate it. Judge Mellen, a reliable Alaskan, is probably the best-posted man living in regard to that discovery. It is one of those things which occasionally remind us that Columbus was only an official discoverer of America.

Our voyage through British waters—Greenville Channel and many other passages—was pleasant, even in winter. We were finally awakened to a dreamy reality of the electric light of Seattle, twinkling messages from civilization.

In Seattle, little dog Pete industriously attended to his own feeding, in a way. He would dart down alleys to a place opposite the back doors of kitchens and there he would roll over, stand on his hind feet, bark and perform all the tricks that he knew for the cooks' benefit. The result was a feed of the best that was available.

Mr. Beatie, Mr. Handrie and myself took Pete with us for a trip to Bremerton. The little steamer barely touched at Pleasant Beach, and Pete, thinking no doubt, that we were going ashore there, jumped onto the wharf. He had no more than done so, when the swift little steamer turned out into the stream and continued its journey. Pete looked perfectly foolish, as he stood there on the wharf and watched us leave him.

We remained at Bremerton all that day, and on

our return we stopped off at Pleasant Beach for the little dog. We searched everywhere, made inquiries, and even crossed the Island to Point Blakeley, but could not hear one word of him. No one seemed to have seen such a dog on that island.

About nine o'clock that night we hailed another boat and returned to Seattle. From the wharf we wound our way among moving trains, and crossed streets crowded with teams, street-cars and foot people, and about 11 o'clock we arrived at our hotel. There was Pete, awaiting our arrival, and he really seemed to say:

"It's a pity that you fellows can't go anywhere without getting lost!"

He had watched for that particular boat, on its return, and quietly stolen aboard and returned to the hotel at Seattle. A twelve-year-old boy would not have used better judgment, yet a few egotistical human beings contend that only man is capable of reason.

Pete was stolen from me at Seattle, and it was three months before I regained possession of him. He was found because he slipped away from his captors and returned to the hotel in search of his master. By the aid of a telegram, he was in my possession within two weeks, and with his head on my arm, I wiped tears from his eyes as he whined his glad recognition. At this writing, little dog

Pete is on a California ranch, retired on a life pension.

We Alaskans were astonished at the growth and improvement which the commerce with our northern country had developed in Seattle. During the previous ten years, the Seattle bank clearings had increased from \$1,000,000 per month to that much per day, and the exports and imports of Puget Sound had tripled, and so had Seattle's population. According to the *Pacific Monthly*, Seattle's commerce by water during 1908 amounted to \$122,000,000, and was carried by 1850 vessels. Two railroads had gophered tunnels beneath the city, and one could dimly foresee the future possibilities of all the cities bordering that Sound, which is really one end of the inside passage that is 1200 miles long.

It is humiliating, after an Alaskan has risked his life a thousand times in the North, to come to civilization and be run over by an ice-wagon or a push-cart. While one of our number was dodging the street traffic, he proved himself to be a natural detective. He discovered a thief falling in love with his overcoat, so he stepped outside a West Seattle ferry building, leaving them alone together, and awaited the thief's departure. He stationed himself beside the door, intending to interfere with that elopement, by his detective abilities—and force, if necessary. These activities of his needed burnishing



up a little, anyway. Just then a friend came along, and told such an interesting and laughable story that the would-be-detective forgot his duty and failed to observe the chief as he walked out within a few feet of him bearing the coat. A professional detective might not have been able to have set a trap and then let the thief walk off with both trap and bait, but this amateur did. I was personally acquainted with this would-be-detective, because it was my overcoat.

## CHAPTER XXIX

*We have searched for Nature's treasure in the sharp peaks'  
upper air,  
Where hearts beat to rapid measure, mid bleak glaciers and  
snow glare;  
And although our footsteps quicken, to meet brothers in the  
vale,  
We shall think of those, down-stricken, who now rest be-  
side the trail.*

### THE END OF THE TRAIL

I LEFT Seattle, wondering if my new overcoat could be taken as evidence of the "Seattle spirit," I had heard so much about. We passed through the city of Tacoma, where a smelter has an output of \$1,000,000 per month. Alaska ore and concentrates shipped to this smelter amount to 7000 tons per month. Even fish are shipped down from Alaska to Tacoma and then to the Atlantic coast; which is a parallel to the proverb of "sending coals to Newcastle."

We passed around one of the long fingers of Puget Sound, which here extends far inland, and where the city of Olympia is growing around the nail. We crossed the great Columbia River—"Where rolls the Oregon," wrote Bryant, and Oregon it should have been named. We entered Oregon,

the State that is famous for its apples. I ate one, but it was a Ben Davis, and whenever I eat a Ben Davis apple I am reminded of the possibility of crossing a turnip with an osage orange.

We passed up the banks of the Willamette River, the stream that S. L. Simpson's poem said was "softly calling to the sea." It was there that we saw the beautiful Mongolian pheasants in fields that were inclosed by old-fashioned worm-rail fences, just about as straight as some city officials we have read about. We passed one of many old farm-houses with the old-fashioned porch in front, the moss on the roof, "the well with the old oaken bucket," the stable and the cow shed, the strawstacks and the pigpen. One could imagine himself inside of that house and partaking of one of those old American farmers' dinners that are too good for a king. There was the orchard, the brook, the ash trees; and it all went to explain why the children of the Willamette, like those of the Missouri and the Wabash, speak of home so lovingly.

Oregon! How much interesting history is associated with the name: the deeds of Marcus Whitman, Joseph Lane and hundreds of others: of hardships and exposures, Indian battles and death. Those old pioneers came, struggled and conquered, and built up homes for their families, while they in turn have built up States.

We climbed steep grades and descended into Cali-

fornia. As we dropped into a deep canyon, I endeavored to admire Mount Shasta, but it had lost the prestige it had for me when a boy. Mount McKinley, Mount Logan and Mount St. Elias are each a mile higher. A perpendicular mile would require a much larger base and would be a much greater monument; so much so, that even Mount Sanford, only half a mile higher, would look twice as large. It is the last half-inch that is added to one's nose which makes it remarkable.

To the southwest, the distant mountains were reminiscent of boyhood days, of Russian and Eel Rivers, bucking mustangs and riettas; of babbling brooks, shady nooks and swimming holes. Lula McKnab, in her beautiful and realistic poem, "Mendocino," said:

"And as flows thy Russian River in the flood-time to the sea,  
So, O Mother Mendocino! turn thy children's hearts to thee."

Here was once the hunter's paradise. Grouse drummed him to sleep, gray squirrels awakened him to listen to the call of the mountain quail, and he could kill a deer before breakfast if he so desired. Here one could lie in the shade of the pine, listen to the sighing of the breeze through the boughs, and thus renew his life-lease.

In California's early days children played black-man with lassoes, and a boy's education was considered incomplete until he had served a time as a vac-

quero. When he was graduated at that, he was properly recognized in society. Then how proudly he would exhibit the large bells on his Spanish spurs that would properly lock the rowels; and tell of losing the hondas off his lariat when lassoing a black steer, which always roamed on the other side of the mountain.

Young California would scorn to lasso a horse by any but a forefoot. How he would look down on an inferior! These "cabelleros" prided themselves in that and their gauntlet gloves, high-topped boots, red flaming scarfs and their ability to speak the Spanish language. They became tame citizens by settling down on farms and in cities. A few did enter the penitentiaries and others even entered politics, and all because the demand for their romantic and preferable calling was limited.

This narrative is about ended. The places on Prince William Sound, Alaska, where was heard not long since only the noise of the wild fowl, are now teeming with boats on the water and with miners and mechanics hammering on land. The laughter of the loon and the quacking of ducks are seldom heard, as they have flown to less frequented localities. Railroad companies are now competing for right of way to the interior by way of the Copper River and its valley, and when the product of the world's greatest copper mines are being



smelted by fuel from the immense coal deposits there, then will be established enormous commerce with the Orient.

This narrative describes and treats of about one-sixth part of Alaska. There are other rich districts known up there, and doubtless many that are yet unknown.

When Captain Abercrombie, Sam Lynch and I camped and ate porcupine on the Tanana slope of the Alaskan Range, we were then in an unknown country. At that time a prospector who had been on the Tanana was a curiosity. To-day the principal city in Alaska is on the Tanana River. Nine million dollars of gold were produced from the Tanana River Valley in the year of 1906. More than 30,000 acres of land have been homesteaded in that valley. Vegetable gardening there has been very profitable.

#### ALASKA'S OUTPUT IN GOLD

The year of 1909 announces to the world that Alaska thus far has produced \$300,000,000. The Seattle assay office alone, during the five years previous to June, 1905, melted \$100,000,000 of gold. The Alaska trade with the United States during the year of 1905 amounted to \$3,000,000 per month. Alaska annually ships \$10,000,000 worth of valuable ores into the United States, and the product is rapidly increasing.

## COAL

Alaska coal must be reckoned among the future products of the north. That country possesses all grades of coal from lignite to anthracite. Great deposits of coal are yet unknown to all but a few prospectors, trappers and Indians. The Indians call coal "fire-rock." The reported analysis of Controller Bay coal was: moisture, 2.18 per cent.; vol. comb. matter, 12.76; fixed carbon, 74.33; and ash, 10.73 per cent. Coal exists on both sides of the Alaskan Range, but the greatest known deposits are on the Tanana side.

## TIN

Alaskans believe the world's supply of tin will soon be produced from the Seward Peninsula. It is more than probable that English capital will secure control of it and not allow the development to be inimical to the advantage of their already developed mines in England, as they practically control the price of the product. It is now necessary to send Alaska tin ore to Europe to have it reduced. The ore of Alaska is said to assay higher than that of the Eastern Hemisphere, and it is claimed that the deposits are far more extensive. In addition to the tin ore in place there are extensive placer tin deposits in gravel.

## SEALS

The North American Commercial Company has

the sealing rights leased from the government. Under the conditions, they are allowed to slaughter 15,000 fur seals annually. These fur seals are rapidly becoming extinct. Japanese poachers have been intruding on the breeding grounds, and in 1906 several of them were caught, and a few were shot, by the government guards while attempting their capture.

#### SALMON

One season's catch of salmon has amounted to more than 26,000,000 fish. This means that if those salmon were placed in a row, touching nose and tail, the string of fish would be more than 10,000 miles long, and would continuously extend three times across the continent, easterly and westerly.

#### REINDEER

At this time, 1280 reindeer have been imported from Siberia into Alaska at a cost to the United States of about \$140 per head. They have increased to more than 10,000 and are destined to be one of Alaska's future valuable assets.

#### A FEW FACTS

We paid about two cents an acre for Alaska, where, if the beaver alone within its borders were protected for twenty years the value of their pelts would amount to more. That much was paid for a country that proudly claims more beautiful and im-

pressive scenery than Switzerland, the Austrian Tyrol, Venice, Vesuvius, Pompeii and the bay of Naples; and which has locked in her bosom more coal than Pennsylvania, more tin than Wales, more iron than Sweden, more silver than Colorado, more copper than Montana and more gold than California.

There are 59 domestic and 181 foreign corporations operating in Alaska; also there are 26 newspapers; 50 Dept. U. S. mineral surveyors; more than 100 lawyers and nearly 300 notaries public.

While the reader has been taken through the most mountainous, most picturesque and most difficult section to traverse in all Alaska, yet the scenes depicted of trail life may, in considerable degree, be accepted as characteristic of the trails in other localities. In summer the same long days light the way of the adventurous prospector, whether he be with an equally adventurous companion, or as part of a stampede to a new Eldorado, following untrodden courses into the mysterious north; the same battle with the pestiferous mosquitoes and gnats whose legions seem to guard the almost invisible kingdom of gold; the same examples of heroism and imprudence, of grit and hair-breadth escapes; and in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties.

In the Copper River country the copper and precious metals are generally locked in the grasp

of rock-ribbed and snow-mantled mountains. In the Yukon and its tributaries, Nature still protects its measureless riches in great beds of gravel and silt, and at Nome the old ocean beach seems a memorial of the scorn of the sea for the world's standard of value, as if to say: "All the gold of the world does not possess the intrinsic value of the moisture-laden clouds that I send to thirsty fields."

Alaska has been maligned because it has been misunderstood. We must shamefully confess that the Hon. William H. Seward was subjected to scathing criticisms on the floor of Congress for recommending its purchase. Now the true worth of the country is rapidly becoming known to the white race, while "Lo, the poor Indian," indifferent to the possibilities of his environment, will as quietly disappear as do the foggy mists of those valleys before the almost continuous rays of Alaska's summer sun. The pioneers who labored, struggled and died will be forgotten, although they blazed the way and opened opportunities for their fellowmen, for it will be with them as with other pioneers throughout the world.

There are many noted and worthy pioneers whose names are not mentioned in this narrative, as it was intended to describe the country and its conditions, rather than individuals. Most of those who remained were men of good principles. There have been heroes in Alaska, as noble as any in history. The lone prospector, ragged and destitute, clinging



to the hope that he might find a sufficiency for the loved ones at home, was there; and if he failed, and returned home penniless, he was a hero for trying. There are other heroes who could be mentioned, among them the noble seafaring men who walked the bridges of their ships in the many wintry storms.

There are a few self-important but uninformed critics, who stand on an eminence of self-assumption and condemn all of the pioneers as an undeserving lot, but such are not worthy of consideration. They knew nothing of their hardships, privations and struggles, nor have they the fellow-feeling for their brother-man that pulsates in the breast of heroes, and actuates them to do noble things and accomplish great results.

The frontiersman knows no superior and is subservient to none. He is his own physician, breathes pure ozone and lives a long life. He values you according to your honor and integrity, and not on your possessions or social position. The frontiersmen have been the greatest soldiers of all ages, and General Scott could tell them when to charge, but no one could tell them when to retreat. It is probable that his "dead shots," dressed in buckskin, composed the most formidable army of its size that the world has ever known.

One thousand frontiersmen, who have been raised in the wild, if properly equipped with small arms and telescope rifles, could successfully defend a

mountainous district against one hundred thousand invaders. True, they would employ Indian tactics, and every man would be a general, but he would be a successful one, against one hundred of the machine-like drilled soldiers of modern times.

The American frontiersmen, who are now among the mountains of the Pacific, have descended from the pioneers who conquered America for a more contented race, and they now long for other worlds to explore. Many Alaskans can trace their ancestry back to the banks of the Missouri, Tennessee and the Wabash rivers, where settled the pioneers who followed Boone's trace from Virginia. My sympathies are with them, and my ancestors mingled with and fought beside theirs. Indeed it is because of that inherited love for adventure that I spent ten years in Alaska.

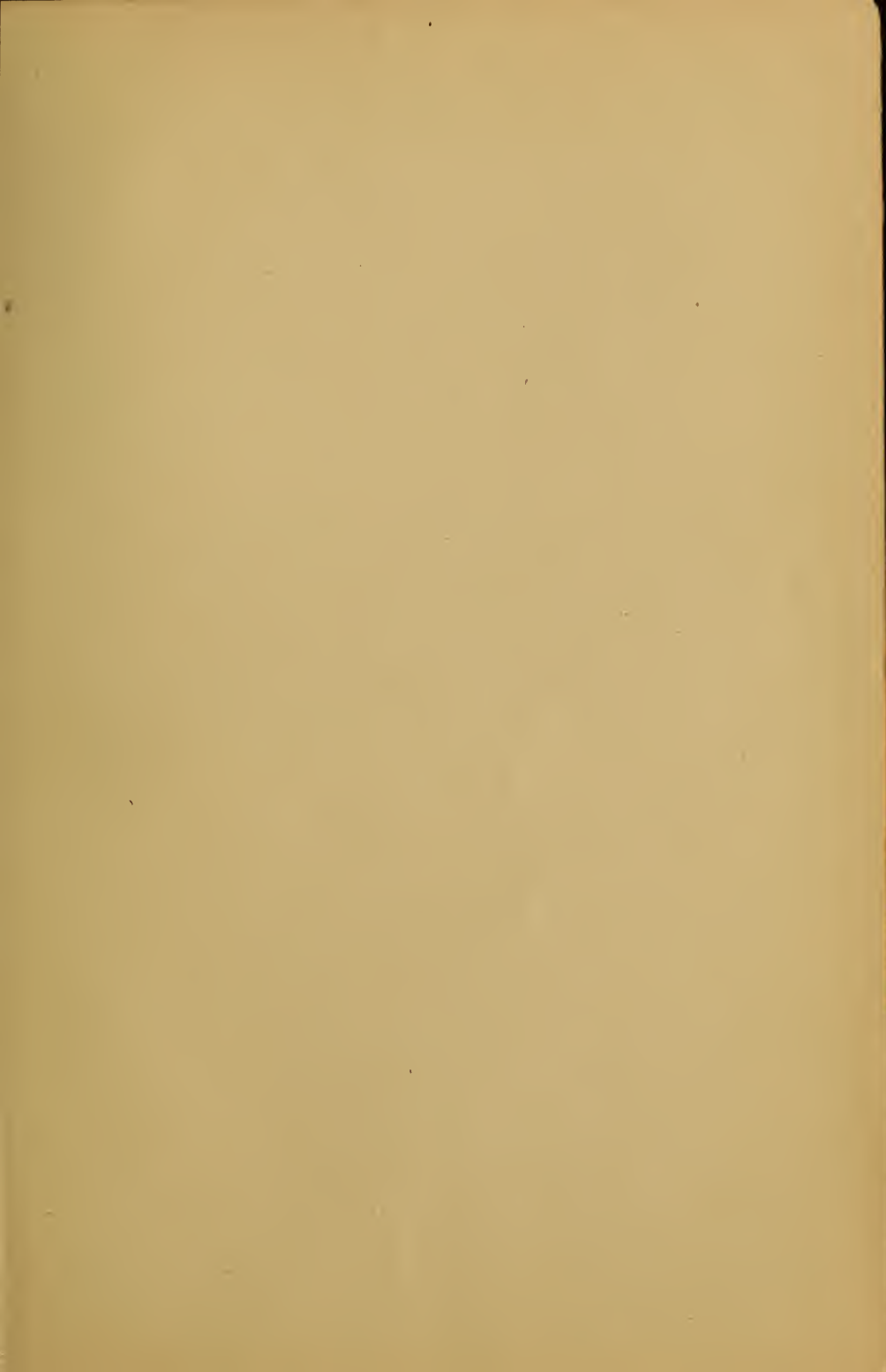
In these pages I have prospected over ten years of experiences, and many incidents have been lost in the panning, but I hope the reader's life-trail has been made no rougher by our having traveled this distance together. It is with reluctance that the wilds are temporarily exchanged for the cook-stoves and dyspepsia of civilization, and I regretfully leave the old campfire, with the pack-saddles scattered around it, and launch this literary raft to prospect other sands, farther down the river of life.







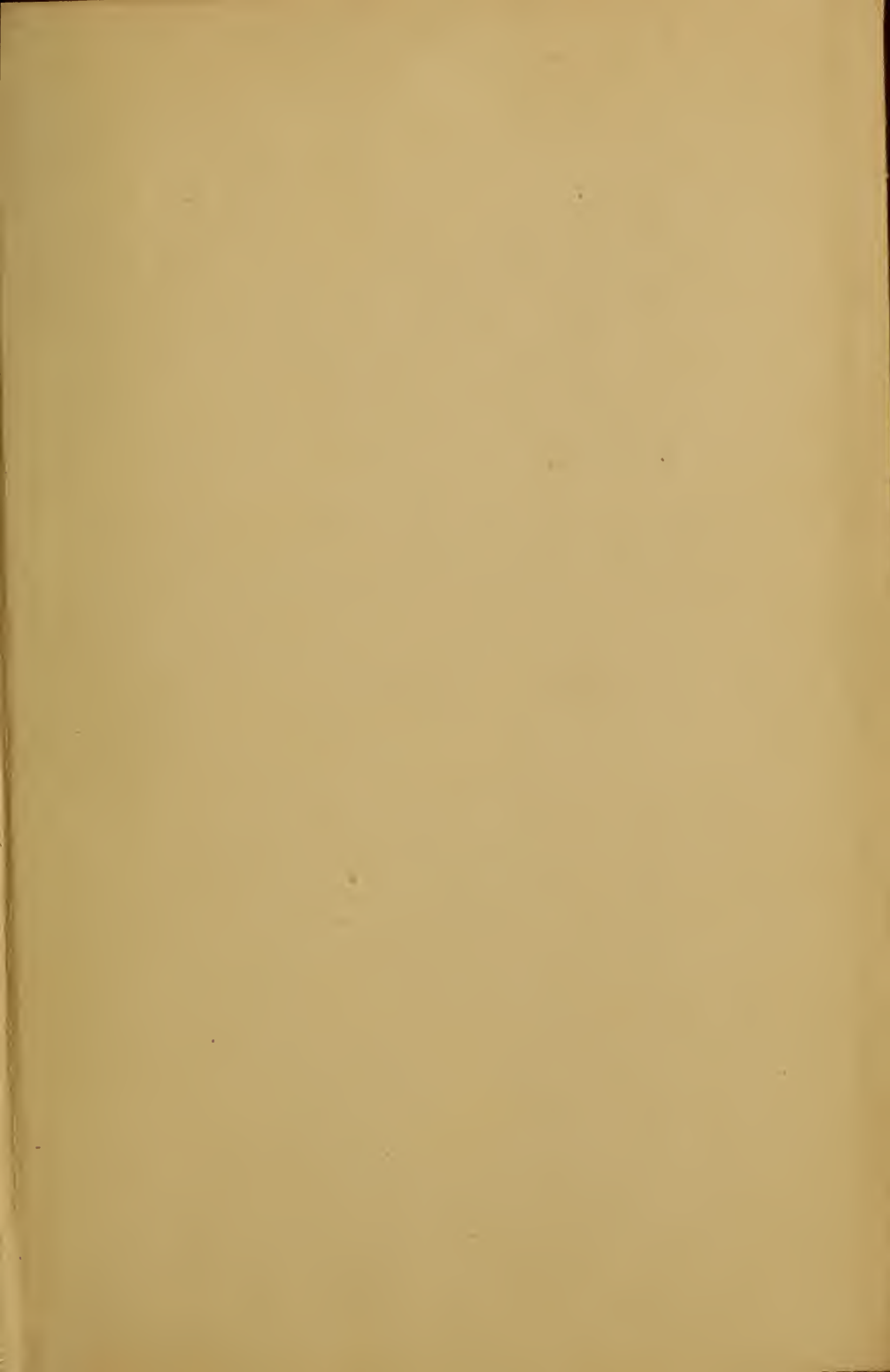




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